

# Evidence based practice - aim is to demonstrate well- reasoned argument skills

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Should Medicare Cover Complementary Health Services Question one There has been a heated debate on whether Medicare should cover complementary and alternative health services. Complementary and alternative health services denote a wide variety of services that do not appear in the category of conventional medicine. However, specialists who offer these services have asserted that these services play a key role in health promotion and treatment of different ailments. For many people, these complementary and alternative health services are of critical help in the management of terminal illnesses. This essay will present reasons why Medicare should cover these services in its health plans. Statistics reveal that about 33 percent of people use complementary and alternative health services annually. The large number of patients relying on such services raises the concern on whether Medicare should cover such services. Of interest is the fact that people who subscribe to other health insurance providers receive covers for these services. Medicare is the health insurance provider for the average American, and this implies that a great number of patients rely on Medicare. Therefore, they may be unable to raise funds to pay for complementary health services. Inclusion of complementary and alternative health services in the Medicare plans will ease the burden experienced by average patient who needs them. It is only reasonable then for the government to lay out a strategy of broadening Medicare plans and include complementary health services (Phelps, 2007: 168). Research has revealed that complementary and alternative health services such as chiropractic, acupuncture and nutritional supplements play a key role in promoting health. Although these are yet to fall under the category of

conventional medicine, the fact that they have registered positive results indicates that they are a necessary part of treatment. For example, chiropractic services have proved specifically helpful to people with spinal cord complications. It has enabled patients with spinal cord complications to overcome disability and dependence. The success of complementary and alternative medicine is reason enough to warrant its inclusion in Medicare plans (Phelps, 2007: 162). Moreover, specialists in the conventional medicine field often recommend the complementary and alternative medical solutions to their patients, indicating their awareness of the potential they possess. The frequency with which patients are using these services should move the government to include them in Medicare plans. Therefore, Medicare should cover health care services provided by complementary medicine practitioners. Question two For a long time, the government health provider Medicare has remained reluctant in its bid to include complementary and alternative medical services in its coverage plans. Although there are different views on the subject, a critical view of what these services entail will help explain the reluctance to include them in Medicare coverage. Complementary health services include chiropractic, acupuncture, nutritional supplements, and herbal services provided by a wide range of specialists. According to these specialists, these services have the potential of promoting health, and are therefore a fundamental part of health care. As many people realize, the institution of Medicare targeted the mainstream health services that conform to conventional medical practice. The call to include complementary health services in the Medicare plan seems out of place according to this line of thought. Although complementary health

services have registered a level of success in promoting health, there are still gaps left in explaining why they have not advanced to become part of the mainstream conventional medical practice if they possess such potential. There is minimal qualitative and quantitative research to prove the success stories from these complementary practitioners scientifically valid. This has been the greatest challenge in the debate surrounding their inclusion in Medicare plans. In the opinion of many people, these services are still alternative health services, and it would be illogical if Medicare was to include them in its coverage plans (Phelps, 2007: 165). Unless there is evidence-based research on the efficiency of these complementary services, they should not be included in the Medicare health coverage plan. Moreover, complementary services remain a personal choice for each individual depending on beliefs and convictions. Therefore, not everyone will be willing to rely on them as a solution to their health problems. Including them in the Medicare coverage plan would seem quite unfair, as some people subscribing to this health plan do not believe in complementary services. Since inclusion of these services into the Medicare scheme would likely trigger an increase in the financial implications in subscribing for the Medicare system, then it would be unfair to the people who rely only on conventional medicine. Therefore, Medicare should not cover health care services provided by complementary medicine practitioners.

Bibliography  
Phelps, K. 2007. General practice: the integrative approach. London, Elsevier.