

Dear Patients,

As your primary care provider, we want to inform you that we have further integrated with Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital and become a hospital-based facility on June 1, 2010. Our new name is Memorial Cornerstone Medicine.

Your clinical experience will remain unchanged when you visit us at our current site at 402 S. 12th Avenue. You will continue to see your own physician, make appointments, and receive follow-up services in the manner to which you are accustomed.

Cornerstone, along with primary care providers across the country, is experiencing continued decreases in reimbursement from private and government insurance companies. This will continue into the future with national healthcare reform. To secure Cornerstone's future and continue our ability to provide high quality primary care to our patients in these difficult economic times, Cornerstone and Memorial Hospital have expanded our historical relationship by changing Cornerstone to a hospital based clinic.

With becoming a hospital-based facility, there are three changes you will notice:

1. The Cornerstone facility has been upgraded to comply with mandates from our state licensing agencies. While making these required upgrades, we also gave the building a face lift and updated and expanded our computer technology to better use electronic medical records.
2. The Cornerstone billing process will now operate as an extension of the hospital billing system. With this change you will receive two bills, one from *Memorial Physicians* for professional services and another from *Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital* for facility charges.
3. The result of these two bills means that Cornerstone patients will experience a slight increase in their cost. However the professional fees charged by Cornerstone are being reduced to partially offset any additional cost to patients. Some of these additional costs will be covered by insurance and accumulate towards meeting your deductible. We encourage you to discuss these changes with your insurance provider.

You are family to all of us here at Cornerstone and we look forward to a growing relationship for many years to come. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us at (509) 225-2001.

Sincerely,



Your Cornerstone Family...Growing Strong

Q. What is Cornerstone's relationship with Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital?

A. Cornerstone and Memorial have been partners for the past eight years; we share the same family-focused philosophy of care. This integrated partnership provides the foundation of strength Cornerstone needs to continue serving all our patients, retaining and recruiting quality medical providers, and maintaining services for our community's senior and at-risk populations. We have decided to expand this partnership, becoming a Memorial outpatient hospital facility.

Q. Why are you making these changes?

A. Insurance reimbursement rates, especially Medicare and Medicaid, do not cover our very conservative cost of operations. We now have the solution that enables us to receive better reimbursement and provide enhanced patient access. The Cornerstone-Memorial partnership is necessary to accomplish this goal.

Q. Why will I receive two bills?

A. As of June 1, 2010, Cornerstone Medicine will operate as an outpatient provider for Memorial Hospital. State billing regulations are different for hospitals than primary care clinics. You will receive two bills, one from *Memorial Physicians* for professional services and another from *Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital* for facility fees; as you would if you went to the hospital.

Q. Will you still accept my insurance and will they cover the new bills?

A. You will initially have an increased out-of-pocket expense which will help meet your insurance deductible more quickly. Like all insurance, once you have reached your deductible these fees are likely to be covered. For our Medicare patients, we anticipate an average increase in co-insurance payments of \$12 per visit. We encourage you to consult your insurance provider if you have questions.

Q. Why do my billing statements look different?

A. You will receive one bill from "Memorial Physicians" for professional fees and another from "Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital" for facility fees. These statements are sent separately and often staggered based upon your insurance company's processing procedures. We bill your insurance as a courtesy and wait for an assessment of patient responsibility before you receive billing from us. So, you may receive the two statements for a single visit at different times.

Q. Will Cornerstone Medicine continue to be a part of the preferred provider list?

A. Yes, this is one of the reasons we have chosen to partner with Memorial. This partnership will allow us to continue providing the same quality service you have come to know and expect.

Q. Can I continue to see my regular doctor?

A. Yes, and your patient experience should be the same when you visit us.

Q. Why are you remodeling and will these expenses be passed on to your patients?

A. No, the remodel has not impacted our fees. The upgrades were due to a combination of compliance mandates from our state licensing agencies and to give the building a facelift. Technology upgrades include a computer in every patient room that is linked to Memorial Hospital resources. Now providers will update patient records during the time of your visit making them readily available should you require emergency care or immediate prescriptions.

Q. What is the purpose of the Medicare Secondary Payer Questionnaire?

A. Cornerstone Medicine is now required at each Medicare patient visit to use the questionnaire to screen for a secondary payer. The purpose of the screening process is to determine whether or not a payer other than Medicare should process the claim.

If you have additional questions, contact (509) 225-2001