

Dental, Vision, and Hearing: Where to Go for Services Medicare Won't Cover

There are some components of health care that are excluded from Medicare coverage, specifically certain dental, vision, and hearing services. The NCOA Center for Benefits Access has released information indicating where individuals who have Medicare and low incomes may be able to receive assistance with these services. Medicare beneficiaries who have a Medicare Advantage Plan should check with their plan to determine if it offers coverage for these benefits. Many of them do and, in some cases, it does have an added premium to add these services to the plan. Listed below are the resources provided, by benefit, from the NCOA.

Dental

*The **“Dental Lifeline Network” of the American Dental Association** runs a program offering free, comprehensive dental treatment to vulnerable people, including the elderly and those living with disabilities.

***“Dentistry from the Heart”** is a nonprofit that arranges community events with local dentists, where attendees may receive a basic cleaning or one extraction or filling free of charge.

***Community Health Centers (CHCs) supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration** provide health services, including dental care, to those with limited incomes, usually on a sliding scale payment.

***Dental schools** often offer low-cost cleaning and care to enable dentists-in-training an opportunity to practice their skills. Check with the American Dental Association to find a program in your area.

Vision

***“EyeCare America”**, a service of the **Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology**, provides free eye exams and up to one year of care for low-income individuals who qualify.

***Local Lions' Club chapters** often have programs to assist those with severe vision impairment. Find your local chapter in your phone book or by visiting the Lions' Club Directory online.

***“New Eyes for the Needy”** purchases prescription glasses using a voucher program for low-income individuals. Only social service providers, not the individuals themselves, may apply.

Hearing

***Sertoma** is a civic service organization that helps connect people with hearing assistance; has a comprehensive listing of national and state charitable programs.

***“Help America Hear”** is an assistance program from the **Foundation for Sight and Sound** providing new hearing aids for low-income individuals.

***The Hearing Industries Association** maintains a Guide to Financial Assistance for Hearing Aids.

*Some **local Lions' Club chapters** run projects which distribute affordable hearing aids to those in need. Contact your local chapter to see if it offers the program.