Medicare Backs Off Restrictions Against Sovaldi/Olysio for Hep C

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Reversing a previous stance, Medicare is now adhering to guidelines recommending Sovaldi (sofosbuvir) and Olysio (simeprevir) combination treatment for people with genotype 1 of hepatitis C, allowing for reimbursement of the pricey therapy, NPR.com reports. Medicare changed its policy based upon an Arizona resident named Walter Bianco who has been living with the virus for four decades and who has significant liver damage, yet who was twice denied Medicare coverage for the Sovaldi/Olysio combination therapy.

In January, the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) recommended 12 weeks of Sovaldi and Olysio plus ribavirin for those with genotype 1 of hep C who are ineligible to take interferon (which many argue includes those who simply do not want to take the injectable interferon and experience its onerous side effects). While this combination has not yet been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration—an application is pending—Sean Cavanaugh, deputy administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said in a statement that Medicare would now follow the AASLD guidelines.

To read the NPR story, click here.

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