GUIDE Respite Benefit

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the GUIDE respite benefit?

The GUIDE respite benefit provides qualifying families with 76 hours of in-home care per year (based on Medicare's annual respite benefit amount of $2,625). This support gives caregivers a break while ensuring their loved one receives quality care. The total amount of respite care may change slightly from year to year, as determined by Medicare.

Who is eligible to receive the GUIDE respite benefit?

A family or unpaid caregiver is typically eligible if the individual enrolled in GUIDE has moderate to severe dementia (as assessed by a nurse).

What if I already get paid to be a caregiver?

As long as you are a relative of the patient, you can still be eligible for GUIDE respite even if you are paid through another program or private funds. However, you cannot be paid through the GUIDE respite benefit to care for your loved one yourself.

Who is considered a Family or Unpaid Caregiver?

If you are a relative or unpaid nonrelative who helps a loved one with any of the examples listed below—or similar caregiving tasks—you are considered a family/unpaid caregiver.

- **Managing Finances**
- **Bathing:** Washing, including getting in & out of the bath/ shower
- **Dressing:** Selecting appropriate clothes & putting them on
- **Transportation**
- **Meal Prep/Eating:** Getting food to the mouth & swallowing
- **Toileting:** Getting to/from the toilet & managing personal hygiene

Please note:

- Family/unpaid caregivers do not have to live in the same residence as their loved one.
- Family/unpaid caregivers do NOT need to be the Medical Power of Attorney (MPOA).
- Family members paid through programs like Medicaid or the VA do qualify as "family or unpaid caregivers" for GUIDE.
- **Paid home care agency caregivers who are not relatives do not qualify as "family or unpaid caregivers."**

What do I need to do to receive the GUIDE respite benefit?

During the GUIDE enrollment process, you must complete a questionnaire. Once enrolled, you will need to continue to meet with your PocketRN Nurse for Life regularly. You will be notified when you can start using your respite benefit.

How do I use my respite hours?

Please reach out to your home care agency directly to utilize this respite benefit. They are partnered with PocketRN to provide your respite care, and will schedule home care services directly with you. You will **never** be billed for the GUIDE respite benefit.

Can I use my respite benefit for a private caregiver or another caregiver agency/service?

This may be possible, but will depend on availability of other approved respite providers in your area. We are required to provide respite services through one of our Medicare-approved providers.

Does my respite carry over to the next year? Do I need to reapply?

No, your respite benefit will reset on July 1 of every year, and unused respite from a previous year will not roll over to the next year. You will not need to reapply to receive your respite benefit, but an annual assessment is required for the GUIDE program.

Is there a minimum number of hours I have to use for in-home respite?

Yes. For in-home respite, GUIDE requires respite to be scheduled with a minimum visit length of 4 hours.

You can use your in-home respite in any combination of 4-hour increments. For example, you could schedule any of the following:

- 4 hours on one day
- 8 hours in a day (two 4-hour blocks)
- 8 hours a day for 7 days straight, and save remaining hours for later

Please note that visits cannot be scheduled for non-4-hour increments, such as 5, 7, or 10 hours. Medicare requires in-home respite to be scheduled in 4-hour increments as part of the GUIDE program.

Can I send my caregiver home early?

Yes, you're able to send your caregiver home early if needed, and use fewer hours than originally scheduled. However, please note that the full number of hours originally scheduled will be deducted from your annual respite care allotment.

