

March 12th is World Kidney Day ~ Please join with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in promoting increased awareness of the diabetes-related services that are covered by Medicare.

More than 13.7 million Americans at least 60 years or older are diagnosed with diabetes or chronic kidney disease¹. Detection and proper treatment of kidney disease is crucial to helping Medicare beneficiaries to avoid complications and lead healthier, longer lives.

Medicare covers a range of dialysis-related services to eligible Medicare beneficiaries, including dialysis and transplant services.

Medicare's Efforts to Improve Kidney Disease Detection

Tens of millions of Americans who have diabetes or high blood pressure are at risk for kidney disease and many do not know it. People with diabetes and high blood pressure, the leading risk factors for the disease, should check their kidney function with:

- an annual urine screening (micro-albumin test);
- a blood pressure check; and
- a blood test to determine eGFR (estimated glomerular filtration rate).

Throughout National Kidney Month, CMS' Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) are working in eleven states throughout the country to urge high-risk patients to ask their doctors for this life-saving screening.

QIOs are partnering with primary care physicians, nephrologists and vascular surgeons to improve care for patients with CKD to prevent or slow the progression of the disease. QIOs work throughout the country with healthcare providers, consumers and stakeholder groups to refine care delivery systems to make sure all patients - particularly patients from underserved populations - get the right care at the right time.

For More Information

- CMS has developed a variety of educational products and resources to help health care professionals and their staff become familiar with coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement for kidney dialysis and transplant-related services.
 - **The Physician's Guide to Medicare Coverage of Kidney Dialysis and Kidney Transplant Services**~ This informative guide provides information to physicians regarding Medicare coverage of kidney-related services, including how your patients can obtain Medicare coverage if their kidneys fail and how Medicare pays for kidney dialysis and transplants.
http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/Book_Kidney_Dialysis-Final.pdf
 - **The Outpatient Maintenance Dialysis End Stage Renal Disease Fact Sheet**~ This fact sheet provides information on the composite rate system Medicare uses to pay for outpatient dialysis, including separately billable items and services.
- For information to share with your Medicare patients, visit: <http://www.medicare.gov>
- For more information about World Kidney Day, please visit the National Kidney Foundation's World Kidney Day website at: <http://www.kidney.org/news/wkd/>
- To learn more about how QIOs are working to increase kidney disease screening rates, visit <http://www.qualitynet.org/medqic>.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "2007 National Diabetes Fact Sheet," accessed at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/ddtstrs/FactSheet.aspx>. The United States Renal Data System, "2008 USRDS Annual Data Report (ADR) Atlas," accessed at: http://www.usrds.org/2008/pdf/V1_Precis_2008.pdf.