

April is National Cancer Control Month

This year, an estimated half million Americans will lose their lives to cancer, and three times that many will be diagnosed with this devastating illness. Cancer patients are parents and grandparents, children and cherished friends; the disease touches almost all of us and casts a shadow over families and communities across our Nation. Yet, today, we stand at a critical moment in cancer research that promises significant advances for patients and an accelerated pace of lifesaving discoveries. During National Cancer Control Month this April, we remember those we have lost, support Americans fighting this disease, and recommit to progress toward effective cancer control.

Prevention and screening are our best defenses against cancer. All Americans can reduce their risk by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, limiting sun exposure, avoiding excessive alcohol consumption, living tobacco-free, and taking advantage of appropriate regularly scheduled cancer screenings. For those covered by Medicare, regular screening with a healthcare professional can play a key role in preventing cancer and detecting the disease early, when it is often most treatable. Under the *Affordable Care Act*, more people with Medicare can now receive many preventive services at no additional cost.

Medicare provides coverage of the following cancer screenings:

- Breast Cancer (mammography and clinical breast exam)
- Cervical and Vaginal Cancer (pap test and pelvic exam (includes the clinical breast exam))
- Prostate cancer (PSA blood test and Digital Rectal Exam)
- Colorectal Cancer
 - Fecal Occult Blood Test
 - Flexible Sigmoidoscopy
 - Colonoscopy
 - Barium Enema

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that a physician's recommendation is the most powerful factor in a patient's decision to receive preventive and screening services. By discussing Medicare-covered cancer screenings and other available options, and engaging patients in decision-making regarding their choices, you can help prevent, treat, and beat the disease. Encourage your patients to get screened—it could save their lives.

More Information for Healthcare Professionals:

- [MLN Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Healthcare Professionals](#) (see Chapter 11)
- [MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Webpage](#)
- [MLN Cancer Screenings Brochure](#)
- [MLN Quick Reference Information: Medicare Preventive Services](#)
- [Tobacco-Use Cessation Counseling Services brochure](#)
- [National Cancer Institute website](#)
- [Smokefree.gov website](#)