

Join CMS in Observing the Great American Smokeout - 2011

CMS would like Medicare providers to join in communicating the message of this year's Great American Smokeout on Thu, Nov 17. The Great American Smokeout spotlights the dangers of tobacco use and the challenges of quitting, and has set the stage for change in social norms related to smoking—the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States—since 1977. Quitting smoking is the single most important action smokers can take to protect their own health and their families' health, as it can contribute to and worsen heart disease, stroke, lung disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis, macular degeneration, abdominal aortic aneurysms, and cataracts. Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and generally diminishes the health of smokers.

Quitting tobacco use can be difficult, but Medicare can help through its coverage under Medicare Part B of tobacco-use cessation counseling for beneficiaries:

- who use tobacco, regardless of whether they have signs or symptoms of tobacco-related disease
- who are competent and alert at the time that counseling is provided
- whose counseling is furnished by a qualified physician or other Medicare recognized practitioner

Medicare Part B covers two tobacco cessation counseling attempts (4 intermediate or intensive sessions per attempt) per 12-month period. Both the coinsurance and deductible are waived. Medicare's Part D prescription drug benefit also covers smoking and tobacco-use cessation agents prescribed by a physician.

What Can You Do?

Talk with your Medicare patients about the smoking and tobacco-use cessation benefits Medicare makes available to them. Encourage your patients to participate in national health observances such as the Great American Smokeout that for many can be a first step toward quitting tobacco use. It's never too late to quit smoking, and with the cessation benefits provided under Medicare, and your recommendation, you can help your patients become tobacco free and reduce their risk of suffering from smoking-related diseases. Encourage those eligible to take advantage of Medicare-covered smoking and tobacco-use cessation and counseling services.

For More Information:

- [The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Healthcare Professionals](#) (see Chapter 15)
- [Medicare Preventive Services Quick Reference Information Chart](#)
- ["Counseling to Prevent Tobacco Use" MLN Matters Article \(MM7133\)](#)
- [Tobacco-Use Cessation Counseling Services brochure](#)
- [The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Webpage](#)
- [The Great American Smokeout official webpage](#)

Thank you for joining with CMS to help increase awareness and educate about smoking, smoking and tobacco-use cessation, counseling, the Great American Smokeout, and related preventive health services now covered by Medicare.