

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) ~ In conjunction with NBCAM, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would like to invite you to join with us in helping to promote increased awareness of the importance of early detection of breast cancer, and ensure that all eligible women with Medicare know that Medicare provides coverage of screening mammograms and clinical breast exams for the early detection of breast cancer.

Next to skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer diagnosed in women in the United States. *National Breast Cancer Awareness Month* educates women about the importance of early detection. The good news is, more and more women are getting mammograms to detect breast cancer in its earliest stages. As a result, breast cancer deaths are on the decline. This is exciting progress. Yet, while mammography screening remains the best available method to detect breast cancer, there are still many eligible women with Medicare who do not take advantage of early detection at all and others who do not get screening mammograms and clinical breast exams at regular intervals.

Medicare Coverage

Medicare provides coverage of an annual screening mammogram for all female beneficiaries age 40 and older and one baseline mammogram for female beneficiaries between the ages of 35 and 39. Medicare also provides coverage of clinical breast exams, every 12 or 24 months depending on risk level for the disease. (clinical breast exams are covered by Medicare as part of the pelvic screening exam)

How Can You Help?

“Pass the Word.” Early detection of breast cancer results in earlier potentially less invasive treatment and an improved chance of survival. CMS needs your help to ensure that all women with Medicare take full advantage of the preventive services and screenings for which they may be eligible.

- Help your patients understand their risk for breast cancer and the benefits of regular screening mammograms and clinical breast exams.
- Encourage your patients to talk about any barriers that may keep them from obtaining mammography services on a routine basis and help them overcome those barriers.
- Make sure that all eligible female patients are aware that Medicare covers mammography screenings every year and regular clinical breast exams.

Please encourage women with Medicare to take full advantage of these vitally important benefits.

For More Information

- For more information about Medicare’s coverage of screening mammography, and clinical breast exams, including coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement, please visit the CMS Medicare Learning Network web page: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Mammography/>
 - The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page ~ provides descriptions and ordering information for all provider specific educational products related to preventive services http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp
- For literature to share with your Medicare patients, please visit <http://www.medicare.gov>
- For more information about NBCAM, please visit www.nbcam.org

Thank you for joining with CMS in promoting increased awareness of early breast cancer detection and mammography and clinical breast exam services covered by Medicare.

FLU SHOT REMINDER

Flu Season is upon us! Begin now to take advantage of each office visit as an opportunity to talk with your patients about the flu virus and their risks for complications associated with the flu. Encourage them to get their flu shot. It’s their best defense against combating the flu this season. (*Medicare provides coverage of the flu vaccine without any out-of-pocket costs to the Medicare patient. No deductible or copayment/coinsurance applies.*) And don’t forget, health care professionals need to protect themselves also. **Get Your Flu Shot. – Not the Flu.** Remember - Influenza vaccination is a covered Part B benefit. Note that influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug. For information about Medicare’s coverage of flu vaccine and its administration as well as related educational resources for health care professions, please go to http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/Downloads/flu_products.pdf on the CMS website.