

June 12-18, 2006 is National Men's Health Week

In conjunction with National Men's Health Week and in commemoration of Father's Day (June 18), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would like to invite you to join with us as we strive to heighten the awareness of prevention and encourage early detection and treatment of disease. Medicare now provides coverage for preventive screenings for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer – four of the leading diseases that significantly impact the health of men. Medicare provides payment for a full range of preventive services specific for men's health that aim to prevent disease from developing or prevent serious complications of disease.

Although Medicare is now providing better benefits, many men with Medicare are not yet taking full advantage of them, leaving significant gaps in prevention. Statistics show that while Medicare beneficiaries visit their physician on an average of six or more times a year, many of them are not aware of their risk for disease or even that they may already have a condition that preventive services are intended to detect. With your help we can begin to close the prevention gap.

How Can You Help? As a trusted source, your recommendation is the most important factor in increasing the use of preventive and screening services. We need your help to ensure that men with Medicare are aware of these covered benefits and that they are encouraged to take advantage of the preventive services for which they may be eligible.

For Patients New to Medicare ~ When appropriate, provide the *Welcome to Medicare Visit*. This one time exam, which must be received within the first 6 months of the beneficiary's Medicare Part B effective date, is an excellent opportunity to orient new beneficiaries to Medicare, assess risk factors for disease, discuss lifestyle modifications that support a healthy lifestyle and may reduce the complication of disease, and encourage utilization of preventive screenings through referral for appropriate services. Remember to follow-up with patients on all screening results, even negative ones – every one likes to hear good news.

Established Patients ~ Remember to talk with your patients about their risk for disease and the importance and value of prevention, detection, early treatment, and lifestyle modifications. Encourage appropriate utilization of preventive services for which they may be eligible and provide follow-up on all screening results and continue to promote a prevention-oriented lifestyle.

Working together we can begin to:

- increase awareness of prevention, and early detection and treatment of disease affecting men's health,
- prevent and reduce serious complications of disease,
- reduce mortality for many diseases effecting men,
- improve the health and quality of life of men,
- ensure that men with Medicare take advantage of preventive benefits they may be eligible for, and
- ultimately, save health care dollars.

Educational Products and Resources for Health Care Professionals

CMS has developed a variety of educational products and resources to help health care professionals and their staff become familiar with the coverage of and payment for the array of preventive and screening services covered by Medicare.

- The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page ~ provides descriptions and ordering information for all provider specific educational products related to preventive services. The page is located at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp#TopOfPage on the CMS website.
- The CMS website also has a prevention website which contains a section on each of the preventive services. Click on <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>, select “Medicare”, and scroll down to “Prevention”.
- For products to share with your Medicare patients go to www.medicare.gov on the Web.

Men’s health conditions do not simply affect men. Wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters are all impacted, making men’s health a family matter. Encourage your patients to take advantage of Medicare-covered preventive services – it could save their life.

Thank you for joining with CMS to spread the message about prevention, early detection and treatment.

For more information about National Men’s Health Week visit <http://www.menshealthweek.org/> on the Web.