

**February is American Heart Month** ~ In recognition of American Heart Month, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reminds health care professionals that Medicare provides coverage of cardiovascular screening blood tests and smoking and tobacco-use cessation counseling for eligible Medicare beneficiaries.

### **Quick Facts**

- Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," it is the leading cause of death for both women and men in the United States and women account for 52.8% of the total heart disease deaths.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women aged 65 years and older.
- Major risk factors for heart disease include high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, tobacco use, diabetes, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition.
- The average age of a first heart attack for men is 66 years.
- Smoking causes coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. Cigarette smokers are 2–4 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than nonsmokers.
- Cigarette smoking approximately doubles a person's risk for stroke.
- Cigarette smoking causes reduced circulation by narrowing the blood vessels (arteries). Smokers are more than 10 times as likely as nonsmokers to develop peripheral vascular disease.

### **Cardiovascular Screening Blood Tests**

Medicare provides coverage of the following cardiovascular screening blood tests for the early detection of cardiovascular disease or abnormalities associated with an elevated risk of heart disease and stroke:

- Total Cholesterol Test
- Cholesterol Test for High-density Lipoproteins
- Triglycerides Test

Coverage of cardiovascular screening blood tests is provided as a Medicare Part B benefit. The beneficiary will pay nothing for the blood tests (there is no coinsurance or copayment and no deductible for this benefit.)

*IMPORTANT NOTE: The cardiovascular screening benefit covered by Medicare is a stand alone billable service separate from the Initial Preventive Physical Examination or Welcome to Medicare Visit and **does not** have to be obtained with the first six months of a beneficiary's Medicare Part B coverage.*

## **Smoking and Tobacco-use Cessation Counseling**

Medicare provides coverage of smoking and tobacco-use cessation counseling for people with Medicare who meet one of the following criteria:

- Use tobacco and have a disease or an adverse health effect that has been found by the U.S. Surgeon General to be linked to tobacco use; or
- Are taking a therapeutic agent whose metabolism or dosing is affected by tobacco use as based on Food and Drug Administration-approved information.

Eligible beneficiaries are covered under Medicare Part B when certain conditions of coverage are met, subject to certain frequency and other limitations.

### **For More Information**

- CMS has developed a variety of educational products and resources to help fee-for-service health care professionals learn more about coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement for preventive services and screenings covered by Medicare.
  - The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page ~ provides descriptions and ordering information for CMS MLN preventive services education products and resources for fee-for-service health care professionals. The web page is located at [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35\\_PreventiveServices.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp) on the CMS website.
  - Expanded Benefits Brochure ~ This tri-fold brochure provides health care professionals with an overview of Medicare's coverage of the initial preventive physical exam (IPPE), ultrasound screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms, and cardiovascular screening blood tests. To view online go to [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/Expanded\\_Benefits.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/Expanded_Benefits.pdf) on the CMS website.
  - Smoking and Tobacco-Use Cessation Counseling Services ~ This tri-fold brochure provides health care professionals with an overview of Medicare's smoking and tobacco-use counseling service benefit. To view online go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNproducts/downloads/smoking.pdf> on the CMS website.

To order copies of these brochures, free of charge, visit the CMS Medicare Learning Network (MLN) at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo/>, scroll down to "Related Links Inside CMS" and select "MLN Product Ordering Page."

- The CMS website provides information for preventive service covered by Medicare. Go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>, select "Medicare", and scroll down to the "Prevention" section.
- For information to share with your Medicare patients, visit <http://www.medicare.gov>
- For information about American Heart Month, please visit the American Heart Association's website at <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3063135> and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at [http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/announcements/american\\_heart\\_month.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/announcements/american_heart_month.htm) on the Web.

Thank you.