

January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month

The month of January has been designated as National Glaucoma Awareness Month. As we approach the end of this month, we ask you to please join with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in promoting increased awareness of glaucoma and the glaucoma screening service covered by Medicare. Glaucoma is the second most common cause of blindness in the U.S. and affects nearly 4 million Americans, half of whom do not even know that they have this disease. Through early detection and treatment, we can prevent blindness.

What Can You Do?

As a health care professional who provides care to seniors, as well as Medicare patients, you can help protect the vision of your patients who may be at high risk for glaucoma. Please educate them about their risk factors and remind them of the importance of getting an annual glaucoma screening exam covered by Medicare.

Medicare Coverage:

Medicare provides coverage of an annual glaucoma screening for beneficiaries in at least one of the following high risk groups:

- Individuals with diabetes mellitus
- Individuals with a family history of glaucoma
- African-Americans age 50 and older
- Hispanic-Americans age 65 and older

A Medicare-covered glaucoma screening includes:

- A dilated eye examination with an intraocular pressure (IOP) measurement
- A direct ophthalmoscopy examination or a slit-lamp biomicroscopic examination

For More Information:

- Glaucoma Screening Brochure – This Medicare Learning Network® (MLN) brochure provides Medicare Fee-For-Service providers with an overview of the Medicare-covered glaucoma screening service. <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/glaucoma.pdf>
- Glaucoma Screening Web Page – This CMS web page provides an overview of the glaucoma screening service covered by Medicare as well as information on educational resources for health care providers. http://www.cms.gov/GlaucomaScreening/01_Overview.asp#TopOfPage
- The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page – This web page provides a list of MLN educational products related to Medicare-covered preventive services. These resources are specifically for Medicare Fee-For-Service providers and their staff. http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp

For more information about National Glaucoma Awareness Month, please visit <http://preventblindness.org/news/observe.html>.

Thank you for joining CMS in promoting increased awareness of glaucoma and the glaucoma screening benefit covered by Medicare.