

May is Healthy Vision Month – Please join the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the National Eye Institute (NEI) in promoting increased awareness of glaucoma and the glaucoma screening benefit provided by Medicare. An estimated 2.2 million Americans have been diagnosed with primary open-angle glaucoma, the most common form of the disease. An additional 2 million Americans have glaucoma and don't even know it. Glaucoma has no warning signs and, if left untreated, can result in permanent vision loss. If glaucoma is detected early, there is treatment available to slow or stop vision loss and reduce the risk of blindness.

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; and
- Hispanic-Americans age 65 and older.

A covered glaucoma screening includes:

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

What Can You Do?

As a trusted source of health care information, your patients rely on their physician's or other health care professional's recommendations. CMS needs your help to ensure that all eligible people with Medicare take full advantage of the annual glaucoma screening benefit. Talk to your Medicare patients that are in the high risk groups identified above about their risk for glaucoma and encourage them to get regular yearly glaucoma screening examinations.

For More Information

- For more information about Medicare's coverage of glaucoma screening, visit the CMS website <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/GlaucomaScreening/>
- CMS has also developed a variety of educational products and resources to help health care professionals and their staff become familiar with coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement for all preventive 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 web page is located at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp on the CMS website.
 - The CMS website provides information for each preventive service covered by Medicare. Go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/>, select "Medicare", scroll down to the "Prevention" heading.
- For information to share with your Medicare patients, please visit <http://www.nei.nih.gov/glaucomaeducation/> and <http://www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma/>.
- For more information about Healthy Vision Month, please visit <http://healthyvision2010.nei.nih.gov/hvm/>.

Help your at risk patients protect their vision. Encourage regular annual glaucoma screenings.