

**March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and March 5 is Dress in Blue Day.** The Colon Cancer Alliance has designated Friday, March 5 as “Dress in Blue Day”, to promote awareness about colorectal cancer and to encourage people to get screened. In addition to “Dress in Blue Day”, the entire month of March has been designated as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reminds health care professionals that Medicare provides coverage for certain colorectal cancer screenings. Screening can help prevent and detect colorectal cancer in its earliest stages when outcomes are most favorable.

### **Medicare Covered Colorectal Cancer Screenings**

Medicare provides coverage of colorectal cancer screenings for the early detection of colorectal cancer. All Medicare beneficiaries age 50 and older are covered; however, when an individual is at high risk, there is no minimum age required to receive a screening colonoscopy or a barium enema rendered in place of the screening colonoscopy.

Medicare provides coverage for the following colorectal cancer screenings subject to certain coverage, frequency, and payment limitations:

- Screening Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)
- Screening colonoscopy
- Screening sigmoidoscopy
- Screen Barium enema (as an alternative to a covered screening flexible sigmoidoscopy or screening colonoscopy)

### **For More Information**

- CMS has 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 Medicare Learning Network (MLN) Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page ~ provides descriptions and ordering information for Medicare Learning Network (MLN) preventive services educational products and resources for health care professionals and their staff. [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35\\_PreventiveServices.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp)
  - Cancer Screenings Brochure ~ This tri-fold brochure provides health care professionals with an overview of cancer screenings covered by Medicare, including colorectal cancer screening services. [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/Cancer\\_Screening.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/Cancer_Screening.pdf).
  - The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers and Other Health Care Professionals ~ This comprehensive resource contains coverage, coding, and payment information for the many preventive services covered by Medicare, including colorectal cancer screening. [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps\\_guide\\_web-061305.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps_guide_web-061305.pdf)
  - Quick Reference Information: Medicare Preventive Services ~ This double-sided chart contains coverage, coding, and payment information for the many preventive services covered by Medicare, including colorectal cancer screening, in an easy-to-use quick-reference format. [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS\\_QuickReferenceChart\\_1.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS_QuickReferenceChart_1.pdf)
  - To order hard copies of certain MLN products, including the Cancer Screenings brochure, please visit the MLN homepage at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mlngeninfo> Scroll down to “Related Links Inside CMS” and click on “MLN Product Ordering Page”
- For information to share with your Medicare patients, visit <http://www.medicare.gov>

- The American Cancer Society offers free materials to help clinicians continue encouraging colorectal cancer screening among patients 50 and older: [http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PRO/PRO\\_4\\_ColonMD.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PRO/PRO_4_ColonMD.asp)
- The National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, which is convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Cancer Society, provides resources for providers, including a guide for primary care physicians: <http://www.nccrt.org>
- For more information about colorectal cancer, please visit the Prevent Cancer Foundation at: <http://www.preventcancer.org/education3c.aspx?id=1036>
- For more information about Dress in Blue day, please visit the Colon Cancer Alliance at: [http://www.ccalliance.org/news\\_events\\_dress-in-blue.html](http://www.ccalliance.org/news_events_dress-in-blue.html)

Thank you for helping CMS improve the health of patients with Medicare by joining in the effort to educate eligible beneficiaries about the importance of taking advantage of colorectal cancer screening services and other preventive services covered by Medicare.