

**March is National Nutrition Month®** ~ Please join with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in promoting increased awareness of nutrition, healthful eating and the medical nutrition therapy (MNT) benefit covered by Medicare. More than 13.7 million Americans at least 60 years or older are diagnosed with diabetes or chronic kidney disease<sup>[1]</sup>. MNT provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional may result in improved diabetes and renal disease management and other health outcomes and may help delay disease progression.

#### Medicare Coverage

Medicare provides coverage of medical nutrition therapy (MNT) for beneficiaries diagnosed with diabetes and/or renal disease (except for those receiving dialysis) and post renal transplant when provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional who meets the provider qualifications requirement. A referral by the beneficiary's treating physician indicating a diagnosis of diabetes or renal disease is required. Medicare provides coverage for 3 hours of MNT in the first year and 2 hours in subsequent years, and additional hours in certain situations.

**NOTE:** For the purpose of this benefit, renal disease means chronic renal insufficiency or the medical condition of a beneficiary who has been discharged from the hospital after a successful renal transplant for up to 36 months post transplant. Chronic renal insufficiency means a reduction in renal function not severe enough to require dialysis or transplantation [Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) 13-50 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>].

#### 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 requests your help to ensure that all eligible people with Medicare take full advantage of the medical nutrition therapy benefit. Talk with your eligible Medicare patients about the benefits of managing diabetes and renal disease through MNT and encourage them to make an appointment with a registered dietitian or nutrition professional qualified to provide MNT services covered by Medicare.

#### For More Information

CMS has developed several educational products related to Medicare-covered preventive services:

- The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers, and Other Health Care Professionals ~ this newly revised comprehensive resource provides coverage and coding information on the array of preventive services and screenings that Medicare covers, including medical nutrition therapy and other services for Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes.  
[www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps\\_guide\\_web-061305.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps_guide_web-061305.pdf)
  - The 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. [www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35\\_PreventiveServices.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp)
  - Quick Reference Information: Medicare Preventive Services ~ this double-sided chart provides coverage and coding information on Medicare-covered preventive services,
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including medical nutrition therapy.

[www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS\\_QuickReferenceChart\\_1.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS_QuickReferenceChart_1.pdf)

- Diabetes-Related Services Brochure ~ This tri-fold brochure provides health care professionals with an overview of Medicare's coverage of diabetes screening tests, diabetes self-management training, medical nutrition therapy, and supplies and other services for Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes.

[www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/DiabetesSvcs.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/DiabetesSvcs.pdf)

- The CMS website provides additional information about the MNT benefit at [www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicalNutritionTherapy](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicalNutritionTherapy)
- To order copies of Medicare Preventive Services products, select the link for “MLN Product Ordering Page” on the MLN Products page at: [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/01\\_Overview.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/01_Overview.asp)

- For information to share with your Medicare patients, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)
- For more information about National Nutrition Month®, or to “Find a Registered Dietitian” consumers and health care professionals can visit the American Dietetic Association’s website [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) to locate downloadable nutrition information for handouts and presentations.
- For more information on diabetes, including additional publications to help educate your patients about diabetes prevention and treatment, please visit the National Diabetes Education Program website at: <http://www.ndep.nih.gov>

Thank you for your support in helping CMS spread the word about the benefits of good nutrition, healthful eating and the medical nutrition therapy benefit covered by Medicare that may help people with Medicare learn to control and manage their medical conditions.

<sup>[1]</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “2007 National Diabetes Fact Sheet,” accessed at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/ddtstrs/FactSheet.aspx>. The United States Renal Data System, “2008 USRDS Annual Data Report (ADR) Atlas,” accessed at: [www.usrds.org/2008/pdf/V1\\_Precis\\_2008.pdf](http://www.usrds.org/2008/pdf/V1_Precis_2008.pdf)