

May is National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month

In conjunction with this national health observance, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would like to take this opportunity to remind health care professionals that Medicare provides coverage of **bone mass measurements** for beneficiaries at clinical risk for osteoporosis.

The facts are that one out of every two women and one in four men over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. Twenty percent of seniors who suffer a hip fracture die within 1 year.

According to the US Surgeon General's 2004 report *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General*, due to the aging of the population and the previous lack of focus on bone health, the number of hip fractures in the United States could double or triple by the year 2020. The report found that many patients were not being given appropriate information about prevention, and many patients were not having appropriate testing to diagnose osteoporosis or establish osteoporosis risk. The good news is that osteoporosis is a disease that largely can be prevented and bone loss can be slowed with treatment. Medicare's bone mass measurement benefit can aid in the early detection of osteoporosis before fractures occur, provide a precursor to future fractures, and determine rate of bone loss.

What can you do? National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month presents an excellent opportunity for health care professionals to promote prevention, detection, and treatment of osteoporosis.

- 1) Become familiar with Medicare's coverage of bone mass measurements;
- 2) Talk with your patients about their risks for osteoporosis, prevention measures they can take, and the importance of utilizing bone mass measurements; and
- 3) Encourage eligible Medicare patients to take full advantage of Medicare's bone mass measurement benefit.

As a health care professional, you play a critical role in helping your patients maintain strong, healthy bones throughout their life. Please join with CMS in spreading the word about prevention and early detection of osteoporosis and ensuring that all eligible Medicare beneficiaries take full advantage of the bone mass measurement benefit.

For More Information

- For more information about Medicare's coverage of bone mass measurements, please visit the CMS website <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/BoneMassMeasurement/>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2004. This document can be downloaded at <http://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/library/bonehealth/> on the Department of Health and Human Services website.
- To learn more about National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month, please visit The National Osteoporosis Foundation website <http://www.nof.org/>

Thanks for your help in this worthwhile endeavor! "Osteoporosis. It's Beatable. It's Treatable"