

More Patients Likely to Ask About Medicare Prevention Benefits

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have launched *A Healthier US Starts Here* campaign, which is an initiative focused on motivating seniors and others with Medicare to make the most of Medicare's prevention services and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Throughout 2007 there will be events and programs designed to promote conversations between people with Medicare, families, caregivers, health professionals, and community organizations about prevention services that Medicare covers to help keep beneficiaries healthy.

“Preventive health care can help people live healthier lives and can help reduce costs associated with treating chronic disease. From Seattle to Miami and Boston to San Diego, *A Healthier US Starts Here* will enlist the support of local organizations to help Medicare beneficiaries and all Americans learn how to live longer, healthier, and happier lives,” HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said.

Our message to people with Medicare is clear: “talk to your doctor to see what services are right for you.” Therefore, we anticipate that clinicians will be hearing from their patients about Medicare-covered prevention benefits and we wanted to provide you with information about correct coding for these services. Here is a link to a copy of the brochure that offers a checklist of the Medicare-covered preventive services: <http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Pubs/pdf/11308.pdf>.

Medicare currently covers:

- A one time “Welcome to Medicare” physical (including an abdominal aortic aneurysm screening for qualifying individuals)
- Cardiovascular screenings
- Cancer tests – mammogram breast cancer screening, pap test and pelvic exam cancer screenings, colorectal cancer screenings, and prostate cancer screening
- Shots and vaccines – flu, Pneumococcal, Hepatitis B
- Bone mass measurement
- Diabetes screening, glucose monitoring supplies, and self-management training
- Medical nutrition therapy for people with diabetes or kidney disease
- Glaucoma test
- Smoking cessation counseling

CMS has also developed a quick reference chart that provides the codes for your office staff to use in billing for preventive services. To download, view and print a copy of the quick reference chart, go to http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS_QuickReferenceChart_1.pdf. You can also go to www.cms.hhs.gov/healthierUS for a copy of a comprehensive toolkit

that includes information for patients. You can also get information about coverage, coding and billing of Medicare-covered preventive services from the Medicare Learning Network Preventive Services Educational Products web page located at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp

The prevention initiative will also encourage people to use the CMS website, www.mymedicare.gov. This is a one-stop, user-friendly website that gives registered Medicare users access to personalized information on benefits and services that are available to them. When beneficiaries log on, they can check which preventive benefits they need; check their Part B deductible status; view eligibility and enrollment information – including for the Part D prescription drug program; and take care of administrative issues such as verifying an address, ordering replacement Medicare cards, check on the status of claims, and get on-line forms and publications. People with Medicare can also get this same information by calling 1-800-MEDICARE.

We hope that you will work with us to help people make the most of their Medicare. By educating your patients about the Medicare covered preventive services that are right for them, we can make sure that a healthier US starts here!

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