

Medicare Minutes

Diabetes Preventive Services

Based on recent studies that have linked the early stages of diabetes with the development of Alzheimer's disease, the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) recommends that patients with diabetes work closely with their physicians to monitor the disease and keep blood pressure and cholesterol levels under tight control. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) offers several preventive services for patients with diabetes, including medical nutrition therapy, screening tests, self-management training, supplies, and other services. Educational products can be found at: www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp

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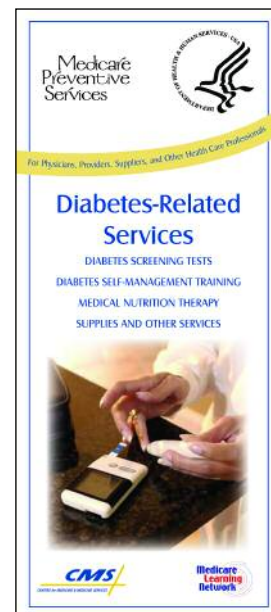
The revised 9th edition of *Medicare Physician Guide: A Resource for Residents, Practicing Physicians, and Other Health Care Professionals* is now available in print and CD-Rom formats from the CMS's Medicare Learning Network (MLN). To place your order, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo. Scroll down to "Related Links Inside CMS" and select "MLN Product Ordering Page."

A downloadable form of the 2nd edition of *The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers, and Other Health Care Professionals* is also available from CMS's MLN. This comprehensive guide provides coding, billing, and reimbursement information for preventive services and screenings covered by Medicare. To view online, go to: www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps_guide_web-061305.pdf.

The following updated CMS preventive services brochures for healthcare professionals are now available in print and PDF format: *Expanded Benefits*, *Diabetes-Related Services*, *Cancer Screenings*,

Adult Immunizations, *Bone Mass Measurements*, *Glaucoma Screenings*, and *Smoking and Tobacco-Use Cessation Counseling Services*. See: www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/MPUB/list.asp. Order copies of these brochures at: cms.meridianksi.com/kc/main/kc_frame.asp?kc_ident=kc0001&loc=5.

The ABCs of Providing the Initial Preventive Physical Examination (also known as the "Welcome to Medicare" Physical Exam) is a 2-sided chart that can be used as a guide when providing the IPPE. The PDF chart can be viewed at: www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS_QRI_IPPE001a.pdf.



Mass Immunizers

CMS would like to remind Part B providers and suppliers that a mass immunizer is a provider or supplier who enrolls in the Medicare program to offer the influenza vaccination to a large number of individuals. Enrollment for mass immunizers is ongoing. Mass immunizers who operate as centralized billers are those entities that operate in at least 3 different payment localities and have received permission from CMS to bill a single Medicare contractor for payment. An annual June 1 application deadline applies only to mass immunizers who are applying for participation as a Mass Immunizer Centralized Biller. Please follow the link www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMMattersArticles/downloads/MM5511.pdf to review *MLN Matters* article MM5511 for further clarification.

Breast Cancer Awareness

On the heels of *National Breast Cancer Awareness Month*, it's fitting to remind practitioners about Medicare coverage of annual screening mammograms for all female beneficiaries age 40 and older

and one baseline mammogram for female beneficiaries between the ages of 35 and 39. Medicare also provides coverage of clinical breast exams every 12 or 24 months depending on risk level for the disease. (Clinical breast exams are covered by Medicare as part of the pelvic screening exam.) Do your part in preventing breast cancer:

- Help your patients understand their risk for breast cancer and the benefits of screening.
- Help your patient overcome barriers that may keep them from obtaining routine mammograms
- Make sure that all eligible female patients are aware that Medicare covers yearly mammography screenings and regular clinical breast exams.

More information about Medicare's coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement can be found at: www.cms.hhs.gov/Mammography/.

Flu Shot Reminder

Begin now to talk with your patients about the flu virus and their risks for complications associated with the flu. Encourage patients to get their flu shot. Influenza vaccination is a covered Part B benefit. The influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug. For information about Medicare's coverage of flu vaccine, its administration, and educational resources for healthcare professions, please go to: www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/Downloads/flu_products.pdf.

Adult Immunizations Web-based Training Course

Medicare Preventive Services Series: Part 1 Adult Immunizations, a Web-based training course to help explain immunization coverage and coding is available for .1 IACET CEUs at: cms.meridianksi.com/kc/main/kc_frame.asp?kc_ident=kc0001&loc=5.

Physician Election for Medicare Part B Drug CAP

The 2008 physician election period for the Medicare Part B Drug Competitive Acquisition Program (CAP) began October 1, 2007 and concludes November 15, 2007. The CAP is a voluntary program that offers physicians the option to acquire many injectable and

infused drugs from an approved CAP vendor, thus reducing the time they spend buying and billing for drugs. The 2008 CAP program will run from January 1 to December 31, 2008. Additional information is available at: www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisitionforBios/01_overview.asp.

Hospital Mistakes Will Be Costly in 2008

As of October 1, 2008, Medicare will no longer reimburse hospitals for preventable complications (secondary diagnoses occurring after admission), including hospital-acquired infections, second surgeries to retrieve objects left behind, transfusions for patients given the wrong blood type, pressure ulcers developed in the hospital, injuries from falls in the hospital, mediastinitis after coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery, air embolism, vascular catheter-associated infections, and certain catheter-associated urinary tract infections. Hospitals, not patients, will pick up the costly tab.

Medicare Cracks Down on Physician Self-referrals

As part of proposed regulations for the 2008 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, CMS has set a ban on Medicare payments for many self-referred services. Changes include adding an anti-mark-up restriction on interpretation of imaging studies and eliminating the requirement for on-site reading. A recent study by McKinsey estimated that physicians have been making \$8 billion a year through the practice.

Medicare Part D Kudos

According to a study by The Amundsen Group, Inc., beneficiary out-of-pocket costs have decreased and access to medication increased through Medicare Part D. By comparing 2005 and 2006 prescription drug insurance data, the researchers found that beneficiaries' daily out-of-pocket (OOP) costs fell by 69%. The number of filled prescriptions increased from 1.7 in 2005 to 3.3 in 2006. Total monthly OOP costs for medicine dropped an average 45% in 2006. Read the full study at: www.amundsendgroup.com. *MPM*