

January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month ~ In recognition of National Glaucoma Awareness Month, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reminds health care professionals that Medicare provides coverage of a comprehensive annual glaucoma screening exam for seniors and others with Medicare at high risk for developing glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in the United States and while anyone can develop glaucoma, the risk of glaucoma increases with age. Early detection and treatment of glaucoma, before it causes major vision loss, is the best way to control the disease.

Medicare Coverage

Medicare beneficiaries in one of the following high risk groups are eligible for an annual glaucoma screening covered by Medicare:

- Individuals with diabetes mellitus;
- Individuals with a family history of glaucoma;
- African-Americans age 50 and older; and
- Hispanic-Americans age 65 and older.

A covered glaucoma screening includes:

- A dilated eye examination with an intraocular pressure (IOP) measurement; and
- A direct ophthalmoscopy examination or a slit-lamp biomicroscopic examination.

What Can You Do?

As a health care professional who provides care to seniors and others with Medicare, you can help protect the vision of your Medicare patients who may be at high risk for glaucoma by educating them about their risk factors and reminding them of the importance of getting an annual glaucoma screening exam covered by Medicare. Your reminder and referral for a glaucoma screening exam can help provide eligible Medicare beneficiaries with peace of mind and safeguard their vision.

For More Information

- CMS has developed a variety of educational products and resources to help health care professionals and their staff learn more about coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement for preventive services and screenings covered by Medicare.
 - The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page ~ provides descriptions and ordering information for all provider specific educational products related to preventive services. The web page is located at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp on the CMS website.
 - Glaucoma Screening Brochure ~ This tri-fold brochure provides health care professionals with an overview of Medicare's coverage of glaucoma screening services. To view online go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/glaucoma.pdf> on the CMS website. To order copies of the brochure, go to the CMS Medicare Learning Network (MLN) Product Ordering System located at: http://cms.meridianksi.com/kc/main/kc_frame.asp?kc_ident=kc0001&loc=5
 - The CMS website provides information for preventive service covered by Medicare. Go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>, select "Medicare", and scroll down to the "Prevention" section.
- For information to share with your Medicare patients, visit <http://www.medicare.gov>
- For more information about glaucoma, visit The National Eye Institute <http://www.nei.nih.gov/index.asp>
- For more information about National Glaucoma Awareness Month, please visit <http://www.preventblindness.org/>

Thank you for helping CMS protect the vision of Medicare beneficiaries who are at higher risk for glaucoma by joining in the effort to educate beneficiaries about glaucoma, and the importance of early detection by taking advantage of the annual glaucoma screening benefit covered by Medicare.