

## Flu Shot Reminder



It's Not Too Late to Get the Flu Shot. We are in the midst of flu season and a flu vaccine is still the best way to prevent infection and the complications associated with the flu. But re-vaccination is necessary each year because the flu viruses change each year. Encourage your Medicare patients who haven't already done so to get their annual flu shot and don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff. **Protect yourself, your patients, and your family and friends. Get Your Flu Shot. It's Not Too Late!** Remember - Influenza vaccination is a covered Part B benefit. Note that influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug. For more information about Medicare's coverage of adult immunizations and educational resources, go to CMS's website: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0667.pdf>.

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## The New HHS National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information Website

### Provider Types Affected

Physicians, providers and their staff, who provide services to Medicare beneficiaries

### Provider Action Needed

This special edition article is for informational purposes and may assist providers when counseling their patients regarding long-term care. The article announces that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has developed a consumer website to help beneficiaries carefully prepare a safe and secure strategy for their future healthcare needs. Resources on the new website include a Long-Term Care Planning Kit and detailed information on what long term care needs are; step-by-step planning; and financial preparation. The free Long-Term Planning Kit and resources to start the planning process can be found at <http://www.longtermcare.gov> on the CMS website. The planning kit may also be

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ordered by phone by calling 1-866-PLAN-LTC (1-866-752-6582). TTY users should call 800-427-5605.

## Background

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This special edition article is being provided by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to inform you that the National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information is a new user-friendly consumer website that provides in-depth objective information on understanding, planning, and paying for long-term care. This important website is a collaborative effort between the Administration on Aging (AoA), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), and it was developed as part of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005 (Section 6021 (d)) which allocated funds to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to help Americans take an active role in planning for their future.

Located at <http://www.longtermcare.gov>, the Clearinghouse website features information and tools to help people better understand the risks for and the costs of long-term care, and it is part of ongoing efforts to increase public awareness about the importance of advance planning for future long-term care needs. Given that one of the biggest barriers to planning is misinformation about long-term care, the Clearinghouse website is designed to provide people with the trusted information and resources they need to take an active role in planning for possible future health care needs.

With an emphasis on the importance of future planning, the website provides a number of resources and interactive tools to help people prepare for their future healthcare needs including:

- Objective information on **specific long-term care planning options**, including the pros and cons of private financing options such as personal savings, long-term care insurance, reverse mortgages, and other options;
- In-depth information on the **availability and limitations of Medicaid** in all states, including eligibility and estate recovery requirements;
- **State-specific long-term care insurance Partnership Programs** under Medicaid;
- **Planning resources** that include an interactive savings calculator, information on the costs of care across the United States, and examples illustrating how individuals have planned successfully; and
- **State and national contact information** for a range of long-term care programs and planning services.

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The website also includes the Long-Term Care Planning Kit, initially developed for the "Own Your Future" Campaign. Information regarding this campaign is in *MLN Matters* article SE0671, located at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0671.pdf> on the CMS website.

A survey showed that consumers who received the Long-Term Care Planning Kit were twice as likely to take some type of planning action, including evaluating their existing coverage, talking to a financial planner, buying long-term care insurance, or considering a reverse mortgage, as those who did not receive the Planning Kit. The Planning Kit can be ordered or downloaded on the Clearinghouse website at <http://www.longtermcare.gov>, as well as calling 1-866-PLAN-LTC. It can also be ordered or downloaded at <http://www.aa.gov/ownyourfuture> on the Internet.

### Additional Information

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For more information about the "Own Your Future" campaign and the National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information, please visit <http://www.longtermcare.gov> on the CMS website.

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