



Medicare: Issue of the Day

January 6, 2004

BETTER BENEFITS – MORE CHOICES

*Good News about the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement
and Modernization Act of 2003!*

Welcome to Medicare Physical:

- ✧ Beginning in 2005, all newly enrolled Medicare beneficiaries will be covered for an initial physical examination.
- ✧ The initial preventive physical exam includes.
 - measurement of height, weight and blood pressure;
 - an electrocardiogram;
 - education, counseling and referral related to other preventive services covered by Medicare including vaccinations, screening mammography, screening pap smear and pelvic exam, prostate cancer screening, colorectal cancer screening, diabetes self-management, bone mass measurement, glaucoma screening, medical nutrition therapy and cardiovascular screening and diabetes screening
- ✧ These new benefits can be used to screen Medicare beneficiaries for many illnesses and conditions that, if caught early, can be treated and managed, and can result in far fewer serious health consequences. Such conditions as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and asthma could be made far less severe for millions of Medicare beneficiaries.
- ✧ For example, approximately 129 million U.S. adults are overweight or obese, which costs the health care system between \$69 billion to \$117 billion per year. Obesity also has a significant impact on Medicare beneficiaries' quality of life and on Medicare spending. For the period between 1996 and 1998, a 15 percent increase in annual per capita Medicare spending is attributable to being overweight, and a 37 percent increase is attributed to being obese.
- ✧ By providing an initial physical examination for all newly enrolled Medicare beneficiaries, seniors and disabled Americans will have the opportunity to discuss with their physician the importance of preventive care and living a healthy lifestyle.