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SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

New Medicare Preventive Service to Fight Obesity

Medicare is adding coverage for preventive services to reduce obesity. Screening for obesity and counseling for eligible beneficiaries by primary care providers in settings such as physicians' offices are covered under this new benefit. For a beneficiary who screens positive for obesity with a body mass index (BMI) ≥ 30 kg/m², the benefit would include one face-to-face counseling visit each week for one month and one face-to-face counseling visit every other week for an additional five months. The beneficiary may receive one face-to-face counseling visit every month for an additional six months (for a total of 12 months of counseling) if he or she has achieved a weight reduction of at least 6.6 pounds during the first six months of counseling.

Social Security Expands Spanish-language Online Services

Social Security has improved their Spanish-language website, www.segurosocial.gov, to include the ability to enroll in retirement benefits and Medicare completely in Spanish. The website also now includes resources printed in Spanish to assist someone applying for Extra Help and a Spanish-language Retirement Estimator.

Medicare Awards Grants to Expand 52 SMP Programs

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the award of \$9 million from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to help Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) programs across the nation continue their work fighting Medicare fraud. Congratulations to the Elder Services of Merrimack Valley's SMP Program, who will receive one of these grants to help sustain this vital program. The SMP volunteers work in their communities to educate Medicare beneficiaries, family members, and caregivers about the importance of reviewing their Medicare notices, and Medicaid claims if dually-eligible, to identify errors and potentially fraudulent activity. Program volunteers also encourage seniors to make inquiries to the SMP Program when such issues are identified, so that the project may ensure appropriate resolution or referral.

LINET Updates

Just a reminder that the LINET BIN number used by pharmacies to process claims changed to 015599 this past fall. If a pharmacy or client reports difficulty with submitting a claim, you may provide them with the attached *Four Steps for Pharmacy Providers* that includes this updated information.

Medicare Rights Center Resource

The November/December 2011 issue of the Medicare Rights Center's newsletter, *The Medicare Counselor*, is attached. It includes information on Medicare's mental health benefits, the Special Enrollment Period for Discontinued Plans, and the Medicare Secondary Payer Recovery process.

MASSHEALTH & THE CONNECTOR

Administrative Review Process for Some MassHealth Members

Counselors should be aware the MassHealth has initiated a new streamlined administrative review process for certain MassHealth members. This process will replace the current annual review form for some. Instead of being required to complete and return a full annual review form, selected members will only need to use the enclosed form to indicate any changes to their circumstances. If there are no changes to report, then the member does not need to do anything and his/her eligibility will be automatically renewed for another year.

To be able to use this streamlined process, a member must meet the following criteria:

- ◆ Community adults aged 65 and older who
 - are single or a couple with no dependents;
 - have assets less than \$2,000 (individual) or \$3,000 (couple);
 - have Social Security benefits as their only source of income;
 - are not subject to a deductible; and
 - have Medicare.
- ◆ QI, SLMB, and QMB members who
 - are single or a couple with no dependents;
 - have assets less than \$6,680 (individual) or \$10,020 (couple);
 - have Social Security benefits as their only source of income;
 - are not subject to a deductible; and
 - have Medicare.
- ◆ Home and Community-Based Service Waiver members, members eligible for coverage under the Pickle Amendment, disabled adult children, and disabled adult widows who
 - are single or a couple with no dependents;
 - have assets less than \$2,000 (individual) or \$3,000 (couple);
 - have Social Security benefits as their only source of income;
 - are not subject to a deductible; and
 - have Medicare.
- ◆ Single adults and couples aged 64 and under who
 - have no dependents;
 - have Social Security benefits as their only source of income;
 - do not have an unmet deductible; and
 - have Medicare.

The MassHealth Provider Bulletin is attached.

MISCELLANEOUS

Changes to the Medical Security Program

Effective January 1, 2012, the Division of Unemployment Insurance will be making changes to its Medical Security Program's Direct Service Plan. These changes do not affect eligibility or members who receive premium assistance. Affected individuals have received notices that they will be disenrolled from the previous Blue Cross Blue Shield plan to a new Network Health Plan. Other changes include:

- ◆ New Network Health membership cards
- ◆ New cost sharing model – The new plan will have no deductible and lower co-payments than the previous plan. Members may be required to pay a weekly premium based on family income and size. Weekly premium costs will range between \$0 and \$27 per covered individual. Families with income less than 150% of the federal poverty level, children 19 and under, disabled individuals and pregnant women are exempt from premiums.

Further details can be found at the following [link](#).

Funding Opportunity to Educate Woman about Benefits

The Office on Women's Health has announced grants to support activities that provide awareness and education to women regarding the programs, benefits, and rights under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). These activities can cover preventive services, Medicare benefits, reducing health disparities, and the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan. The deadline for proposals is Jan. 20. Grants will be awarded up to a maximum of \$2,500. The request for proposals is attached.

THE SHINE SPOTLIGHT

Seeking Nominations!

The SHINE Spotlight shares interesting stories or notable achievements of the many dedicated SHINE Counselors across the state. To nominate a SHINE Counselor to be featured in this section, contact Chris Ciano at christopher.ciano@state.ma.us.

SHINE EVENTS

SHINE Regional Directors' Meeting

Tuesday, January 31
Milford Senior Center

OUTSIDE EVENTS

Public Hearing on MassHealth Duals Demonstration Draft

Wednesday, January 4
10am – 1pm
State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2-3
10 Park Place, Boston MA

Massachusetts Health Care Training Forums

Wednesday, January 4
9am – 1pm
Holiday Inn Taunton
700 Myles Standish Blvd, Taunton MA

Friday, January 6
9am – 1pm
Holiday Inn Holyoke
245 Whiting Farms Rd, Holyoke MA

Thursday, January 12
9am – 1pm
Holiday Inn Tewksbury
4 Highwood Dr, Tewksbury MA

Wednesday, January 18

9am – 1pm

Back Bay Events Center- Dorothy Quincy Suite

180 Berkeley St, Boston MA

* **new location**

Friday, January 27

9am – 1pm

Hoagland Pincus Conference Center

222 Maple Ave, Shrewsbury MA

Agenda and online registration can be found at the following [link](#).

ATTACHMENTS

- ◆ LINET Four Steps for Pharmacy Providers
- ◆ The Medicare Counselor
- ◆ MassHealth Administrative Review Process
- ◆ Educating Women ACA RFP

Contact SHINE State Staff

Cynthia Phillips
Director

cynthia.phillips@state.ma.us

Chris Ciano
Assistant Director

christopher.ciano@state.ma.us

Jennifer Syria
Field Operations Manager & Training Coordinator

jennifer.syria@state.ma.us

Richard Miranda
Program Coordinator

richard.miranda@state.ma.us