



### 2011 AUGUST SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL NEWSLETTER

#### **New Medicare Benefits in 2011: Working to Lower Your Future Medical Costs**

In light of a new emphasis on better Medicare coverage of preventive services, Medicare has a new brochure for Medicare beneficiaries called, “Your Guide to Medicare’s Preventive Services.” The Affordable Care Act made several improvements to Medicare coverage and this book explains those changes.

**For people who’ve just started original Medicare in the last 12 months,** a no cost “**Welcome to Medicare**” physical is available. (There is no cost if the doctor accepts “assignment”.) This benefit is a great opportunity for you to:

- Check with your doctor about future screenings you should have based upon yours and your family’s medical history. Your doctor can inform you which screening tests you’d be eligible to receive at no cost because Medicare pays the full bill.
- Make certain your immunizations are up to date.
- Review the medications and over-the counter drugs you are taking.
- Your doctor will check your vitals, calculate your body mass index and give you a simple vision test.

**For people who’ve been on Medicare more than one year,** in 2011 you can begin to receive a yearly “**wellness exam**” which is fully paid by Medicare if your doctor accepts assignment. This doctor visit would include a review of your medical history, your medications, listing all other physicians you are seeing, making a schedule for future screenings you should have and a plan to monitor your health. Remember, your doctor may decide to do a more in-depth exam or order tests during this visit that may not be part of the no cost exam, but would be covered under usual Medicare payment rules if they are medically necessary.

When it comes to medical services that are referred to as “free,” the Senior Medicare Patrol wants to remind you to be cautious. If someone promises they are providing “free” health care in exchange for your Medicare number, think twice! Make certain the medical provider is known by you, that you know exactly what services are being provided and be certain to watch for your Medicare Summary Notice to see that Medicare pays only for exactly what you had done and no more..

You can request a free copy of the new brochure from Medicare “Your Guide to Medicare’s Preventive Services” by calling 1-800-633-4227 (TTY call 1-877-486-2048).