



## Medicare to Select 20,000 People in Maryland and Washington D.C. to Participate in a New Patient Education and Support Program

More than 20,000 fee-for-service Medicare beneficiaries living in your area will have the opportunity to voluntarily participate — at no cost to them — in Medicare Health Support, a new program from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This important program will provide telephone-based patient education and special support services to people living with heart failure and/or diabetes and their family members or other caregivers. Some of your patients may be selected to participate.

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**What is the Medicare Health Support program?** Medicare Health Support is a new Medicare initiative created to give people living with heart failure and/or diabetes additional education and support services to help improve self-management of their condition and to stay healthier. Medicare beneficiaries who agree to participate will be paired with a team of registered nurses who will serve as advocates and coaches, ensuring that beneficiaries fully understand and follow the care plan you prescribe. The Maryland and Washington, D.C. area was selected as one of nine regions to participate in a pilot program to run through 2008. **Medicare is working with American Healthways, a leading provider of care-support programs, to deliver the program in your region.**

**How will this program help my patients?** The program is designed to reinforce your treatment plans by helping your patients take a more active role in their health. It does not replace physician office visits. Our nurses, along with a team of social workers, pharmacists, and dietitians will provide your patients with additional education about their disease, assist them with managing multiple medications, and coach them in making any necessary lifestyle changes. Think of this multidisciplinary team as an additional hand to help keep your patients healthier and to minimize the need for emergency and crisis care. Information about some of the specific tools and resources is available on the back of this fact sheet.

**How will program participants be selected?** This is a three-year pilot program that, if successful in improving health and reducing costs, will be available to all Medicare beneficiaries.

CMS will identify Medicare beneficiaries living with heart failure and/or diabetes with current or past complications. Each beneficiary will be randomly assigned to the program or a control group. CMS will provide information about the program to those selected for the program. It is important to note that your patients' Medicare benefits will not change if they elect to participate.

**How will I know whether one of my patients is selected?**

CMS will inform you directly if one or more of your patients has been selected for the program. These patients will also receive information from CMS. We will follow up with each patient to confirm participation in the program and will strongly encourage each patient to consult with his or her physician about the program.

**What additional paperwork will I have to complete?**

There is no additional paperwork. The program works seamlessly with you and your office staff. We have a variety of support services available to you, should you choose to use them. In addition, we can send a nurse representative to your office who can provide more details about the program and explain how it works.

**When will the program start?** August 1, 2005.

**How can I learn more?** To learn more about Medicare Health Support, go to [www.medicarehealthsupport.com](http://www.medicarehealthsupport.com). For more information about American Healthways, visit [www.americanhealthways.com](http://www.americanhealthways.com).

## The Medicare Health Support program will:

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- ▶ **Educate** your patients so that they become more effective self-managers of their diseases.
- ▶ **Improve** patient adherence to the regimens and medications you prescribe, as well as to standards of care for their condition.

- ▶ **Provide** you with additional information regarding patient status between office visits while extending your influence in their daily lives.

### Resources for Patients

- ▶ Regular calls from our nurses to:
  - ▶ Remind patients of key care standards, such as regular eye exams or A1C tests
  - ▶ Conduct general-health and pharmacy-needs assessments
  - ▶ Answer questions about medicines, test results, or instructions that they receive from the different doctors they may see
  - ▶ Discuss hospital, home or nursing care issues that they may find confusing
  - ▶ Discuss fall-prevention techniques
  - ▶ Screen for depression
- ▶ Understand quality-of-life issues and help problem-solve
  - ▶ Provide end-of-life, pain and palliative-care counseling
- ▶ A 24-hour toll-free help line for patients, their family members and caregivers
- ▶ Regular mailings of standards-of-care reminders and other educational materials

### Resources for Physicians

- ▶ Real-time data and customized reports from our information system to help track your patients' health information and progress toward specific goals
- ▶ A dedicated program manager to help you identify patients who are not following recognized standards of care
- ▶ An advisory council comprised of local practicing physicians to help ensure that the program runs smoothly and that it meets your needs

## About American Healthways

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- ▶ For more than 20 years, American Healthways has been working with hospitals, health plans, and physicians to improve patient health and reduce the cost of care.
- ▶ American Healthways currently provides care support services to 1.5 million people nationwide.
- ▶ American Healthways' programs have been reviewed and approved by Johns Hopkins and are accredited by NCQA and URAC.

- ▶ The company's results have been published in peer-reviewed journals such as *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, *The Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, and *Health Affairs*.
- ▶ American Healthways has a team of more than 500 physicians with whom it consults annually to help strengthen and improve its programs. The company's full-time medical director has more than 25 years of experience in health care, including 16 years operating a private cardiology practice.
- ▶ The company employs more than 1,400 registered nurses, each with an average of more than 16 years of experience.

**Important note:** American Healthways has arranged with the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) to provide reimbursement to selected physicians with Medicare Health Support beneficiaries in their practice to undergo selected ACC continuous study programs, also known as SAPs, or ABIM Practice Improvement Modules (PIM).