

News Release

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"A Healthier US Starts Here" Tour Promoting Illness Prevention Comes to New Mexico

Albuquerque, NM – On June 18, 2007, the "A Healthier US Starts Here" bus tour is in New Mexico. The tour is visiting each of the 48 continental states to promote preventive services with Medicare beneficiaries, families, caregivers, health professionals, community organizations, civic and state leaders and others who want to help people live longer, healthier lives. In New Mexico, the bus will stop at the Pueblo of Isleta Elder Center during a free senior health fair scheduled that day.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) are sending the bus around the country to tell its 43 million Medicare recipients about the preventive services for which they're eligible. Among the many tests and services covered under Medicare are flu and pneumonia shots, colonoscopies, mammograms, cholesterol checks and glaucoma screenings. The Isleta event will include blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol screenings, and seniors are encouraged to bring their prescription drugs to the event for assessment. The Pueblo of Isleta, the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department, the National Indian Council on Aging and the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA) are sponsoring the Isleta event.

"With the current rate of increase in health care costs simply unsustainable and the rising toll chronic diseases are taking on our population, the importance of primary and secondary prevention efforts is greater than ever," said Dan Jaco, NMMRA chief executive officer.

"I have never met anyone who would rather be in the hospital for a major procedure that could have been prevented or detected early enough to be treated or managed on an outpatient or self-care basis," Jaco added. "Yet many Medicare beneficiaries fail to take advantage of the preventive benefits available to them under Medicare. That's why NMMRA is so pleased to be able to partner with CMS and other senior leadership organizations in the state to promote increased education on preventive services."

NMMRA – New Mexico's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) under contract with CMS – serves as a resource to the state's health care community and to Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare prevention information being highlighted in conjunction with this effort can be accessed through NMMRA's Web site at www.nmmra.org/beneficiaries/preventive_information.php (beneficiary information) and www.nmmra.org/providers/medicarepreventinfo.php (health care provider information).

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New Mexico Medical Review Association



In addition to building awareness about preventive care, the “A Healthier US Starts Here” tour is also teaching people how to make the most of a special prevention-targeted CMS Web site, MyMedicare.gov – a one-stop, user-friendly site that gives registered Medicare beneficiaries access to personalized information about benefits and services. When beneficiaries log on, they can check which preventive benefits they need; check their Part B deductible status; view eligibility and enrollment information – including the Part D prescription drug program; and take care of administrative issues such as verifying an address, ordering replacement Medicare cards, checking on the status of claims, and getting on-line forms and publications. People with Medicare can also get this same information by calling 1-800-MEDICARE.

The 48-state tour was launched on April 20 and is traveling to state capitals, communities and other Native American locations across the country. It is visiting a variety of local events, health fairs and senior centers. In addition to Medicare’s prevention benefits, the tour is promoting the value of disease prevention and the importance of health and wellness. Part of the tour’s promotion is the HealthierUS.gov initiative, a national effort to improve people's lives, prevent and reduce the costs of disease, and promote community health and wellness. Go to www.HealthierUS.gov for information on how to:

- Make physical activity a part of your day
- Eat more healthy foods
- Protect yourself and your family from illness
- Avoid risks to your health and the health of your loved ones

For more information about “A Healthier US Starts Here,” see also the DHHS news release at www.hhs.gov/news/press/2007pres/04/pr20070420a.html.

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About NMMRA

NMMRA is an Albuquerque-based, non-profit, physician-sponsored organization. Serving as a resource to the state's health care community and to Medicare beneficiaries, NMMRA seeks to fulfill its mission to facilitate demonstrable and continuous improvement in the quality of health care and achieve its vision to be a premier and innovative leader in improving health care. NMMRA has served continuously as the state's only federally contracted Medicare QIO since 1984. NMMRA also serves as the state's Medicaid External Quality Review Organization.

*This material was prepared by the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA), under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 8SOW-NM-CORP-07-08*