**Medicare Outreach Idea of the Month**

**Spread the Word and Stop the Spread of Illness**

**April 2020**

Over the recent weeks and months, newspaper headlines have been filled with reports about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As your community’s local source for information pertaining to Medicare beneficiaries, you can do your part by sharing the facts as well as basic tips for preventing the spread of illness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified older adults and people with severe chronic medical conditions, like heart disease, Diabetes, or lung disease, as higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. As people age their immune systems change, making it more difficult to fight off diseases and infection. Underlying health conditions can also make it more difficult to cope with and recover from illness.

People with Medicare may be wondering about Medicare coverage of their needs related to COVID-19. CMS has set up a webpage for Medicare beneficiaries with information related to the coronavirus, including services and coverage information. You can find it here: [https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.medicare.gov%2Fmedicare-coronavirus&data=02%7C01%7C%7C9df6d2482b1840d7812d08d7c4fdad58%7C8e087664409d4c4ca6b47aa01020d6ea%7C0%7C1%7C637194466184879663&sdata=8x4uhTZfHrWfYp1Z0eliNA0MKzU3avQf%2Bagz3EXGP9o%3D&reserved=0) . You can also stay up to date with the latest information about the coronavirus by visiting the [CDC’s website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html). Consider adding these links to your agency website or Facebook page.

Use the article below in your communities to share important information about COVID-19 and the precautions people can take to prevent the spread of coronavirus as well as other illnesses.

**To view all the GWAAR Medicare Outreach and Assistance Resources, follow the link to our webpage:**

<https://gwaar.org/medicare-outreach-and-assistance-resources>

By the GWAAR Medicare Outreach Team

**Stay Healthy and Stop the Spread of Illness**

(For Reprint)

Preventing disease and staying healthy is a top priority for most Medicare beneficiaries. Over the past weeks the news headlines have been filled with reports about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). It’s important to know the facts, stay calm, and take precautions.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some people are at higher risk for getting very sick from this illness. This includes older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, Diabetes, and lung disease. As people age, their immune system changes, making it harder to fight off diseases and infection. Underlying health conditions can also make it more difficult to cope with and recover from illness.

That’s why the CDC is recommending that people who are at higher risk take the following steps:

* Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications, food, and supplies in case you need to stay home for prolonged periods of time.
* Stay at home as much as possible to avoid exposure to people who are sick.
* When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact, and wash your hands often.
* Avoid crowds.
* Stay up to date on [CDC Travel Health Notices](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html).

You can also take everyday precautions to protect yourself and reduce the spread of the coronavirus as well as other illnesses. The CDC urges individuals to stay calm and follow these common-sense tips:

* Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating; after going to the bathroom; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
* Stay home when you are sick.
* Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

If you have Medicare, you may be wondering about Medicare coverage of your needs related to COVID-19. Here are a few important points to note:

* Medicare covers the lab tests for COVID-19 and you pay no out-of-pocket costs.
* Medicare covers all medically necessary hospitalizations.
* At this time, there is no vaccine for COVID-19. However, if a vaccine becomes available, it will be covered by all Medicare Part D plans.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has set up a webpage for Medicare beneficiaries with additional information related to the coronavirus. You can find the page at: <https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus> . You can also stay up to date with the latest information about the coronavirus by visiting the CDC’s website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html> .

Now is the time to stay informed and follow those basic tips to protect yourself and those around you!

**For questions about Medicare or other benefits, contact <YOUR AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION HERE>.**