



spotlight on health care

Medicare Paying For Preventive Aneurysm Screening For First Time

(NAPSA)—Hundreds of thousands of Americans who receive Medicare benefits now have access to an important tool for fighting vascular disease: a free abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening. AAA is a bulge in the wall of the aorta and exists in an estimated 2 million Americans. AAA rupture is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. and an estimated 15,000 seniors die from AAA rupture each year. In 2007, for the first time, new Medicare beneficiaries at risk for AAA have the opportunity to be screened using painless and noninvasive ultrasound technology.

The Screening Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Very Efficiently (SAAAVE) Act that was passed by Congress is effective as of January 1, 2007. This free AAA screening is available to men who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes at any time in their lives, and to men and women with a family history of AAA. This screening is part of the Welcome to Medicare physical.

“AAA screening is an important measure that will save thousands of American lives each year,” said vascular surgeon Robert Zwolak, M.D., a member of the Society of Vascular Surgery (SVS) and a professor at Dartmouth Medical School. “Our SVS members worked diligently on SAAAVE. These vascular surgeons concentrate their practices on the prevention and cure of vascular disease, and they know the effectiveness of screening in saving lives.”



A stent graft provides a new blood flow pathway for patients at risk of AAA rupture.

All new Medicare beneficiaries are encouraged to call their doctors and take advantage of this improved access to the free AAA screening. The test is quick and painless, involving a simple ultrasound on the abdomen, similar to a pregnancy ultrasound. AAA often has no warning signs and therefore screening is an effective way to detect the presence of a potentially life-threatening aneurysm.

To learn more about AAA screening and reducing the risk of AAA disease, Medicare recipients should consult their physician or visit www.aneurx.com.