

Olympia Dukakis and Louis Zorich Urge Older Adults to Take Advantage of Medicare Diabetes Screening Benefit and to Ask.Screen.Know.

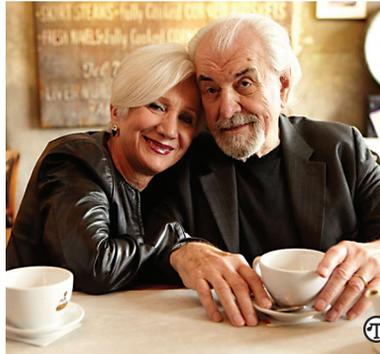
(NAPSA)—Approximately seven out of 10 adults, age 65 or older, have diabetes or pre-diabetes, and of those people with diabetes, almost half don't know it. Fortunately, since 2005, Medicare has offered free diabetes screening services to those at risk for diabetes; however, utilization has been low and many older adults are undiagnosed.

That's why Academy Award® winner Olympia Dukakis and her husband, actor Louis Zorich, have partnered with Novo Nordisk, a world leader in diabetes care, to urge at-risk adults, 65 and older, to get screened for diabetes. They are taking part in an educational program known as Ask.Screen.Know. The program encourages people enrolled in Medicare to ask their healthcare provider about a free screening and to know their blood sugar numbers and what actions to take.

For Dukakis and her husband, involvement in this program hits close to home. The couple, who have been married for 47 years, were recently screened for diabetes and Zorich learned he has type 2 diabetes.

"When we learned that less than 10 percent of people with Medicare have taken advantage of the diabetes screening benefit, we knew we had to do something," said Dukakis. "So we joined forces with Novo Nordisk to share our story—we asked, got screened and now know where our health stands relative to diabetes."

The couple went in to be screened for diabetes because it



Olympia Dukakis and her husband, Louis Zorich, want to encourage those on Medicare and at risk for diabetes to ask for a free screening.

runs in Zorich's family.

"We realized the importance of taking care of our health and we want to be around for as long as possible for each other, and our family," said Zorich. "Now that we know I have diabetes, we can manage the disease the right way, by exercising more and eating better."

A Diabetes Screening— Why Screen?

When your body doesn't make enough insulin or when your body prevents the insulin you do produce from working properly, this could lead to diabetes. When you have diabetes, you need to do the work your body used to do automatically to keep the insulin/glucose balance. The risk of type 2 diabetes increases as you get older, often because people tend to exercise less, lose muscle mass and gain weight as they age.

If left undiagnosed or unmanaged, diabetes can lead to many

health problems, including blindness, kidney disease, foot amputations, heart disease and stroke.

Medicare offers free diabetes screening for enrolled adults, 65 and older, who have at least one risk factor for diabetes, including family history of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity or overweight, and history of diabetes during pregnancy.

The screening benefit includes the fasting blood glucose test. The result of the test is reported with a number that can tell you whether or not you have diabetes. It may also tell you that you have a condition called pre-diabetes, meaning you have blood sugar levels that are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

Medicare also covers the oral glucose tolerance test. A doctor may recommend it if he or she suspects diabetes in cases where a patient's fasting blood glucose level is normal.

Through the program's Web site, AskScreenKnow.com, individuals can obtain important information about the Medicare diabetes screening benefit, learn more about diabetes and pre-diabetes, and access a health-recording tool to keep track of their blood sugar numbers.

The unique Web site even invites users to send an e-mail or voicemail to family members and friends from Dukakis to help spread the word about the Medicare diabetes screening benefit.