

# Health & SCIENCE

## New Medicare Preventive Benefits

**Mammograms:** As of January 1, 1998, Medicare coverage will be expanded to include annual screening mammograms for all women age 40 and over. Medicare will also cover a one-time initial, or baseline, mammogram for women age 35-39. Beneficiaries will pay the usual 20 percent copayment for mammograms, but Medicare will pay the other 80 percent even if the beneficiary has not yet met their annual deductible.

In the past, Medicare covered annual screening mammograms for

women age 50-64, and for women age 40-49 at high risk for breast cancer. Screening mammograms for women age 40-49 at normal risk and women age 65 and over were covered only every 2 years, and one baseline mammogram was covered for women age 35-39. Beneficiaries paid both 20 percent coinsurance and any unmet portion of their deductible.

**Pap Smears:** As of January 1, 1998, Medicare coverage will be expanded for a screening pap smear to include both a pelvic exam and clinical breast

exam every 3 years for most women. The exams are covered every year for women at high risk for cervical or vaginal cancer; those of childbearing age who have had an indication of cervical or vaginal cancer; and, those who have had an abnormal pap smear during the preceding 3 years. Medicare will pay the full claim for the pap smear, and 80 percent of the claim for the pelvic and clinical exams, even if the beneficiary has not yet met their annual deductible.

In the past, screening pap smears were covered every 3 years (or more

often for women at high risk for cervical cancer). The accompanying pelvic exam and/or clinical breast exam were not covered. Beneficiaries will continue to pay no coinsurance or the Part B deductible for any clinical laboratory tests, including pap smears. **Colorectal Cancer:** As of January 1, 1998, Medicare will cover colorectal cancer screening. This coverage includes screening. This coverage includes fecal-occult blood tests, flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy (for people at high risk for colorectal cancer), and in certain cases, barium enemas. Each of these tests are covered under

different circumstances, so patients should check with their physician to determine what is best for them.

In the past, these tests were covered only when a physician already suspected the patient had cancer or other disease, and was using them for diagnostic, rather than screening, purposes.

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## Advocates

### Sought:

#### To Serve Long Term Care Residents

Volunteers interested in investigation, advocacy and the elderly are needed to serve as ombudsmen for residents of nursing homes, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities and adult foster care homes. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman will train the volunteers on the aging process, communication skills, problem-solving skills, investigation and other ombudsman skills. The next training will begin on January 22 in Portland.

Certified Ombudsmen identify and investigate complaints of the residents and then work with the facilities to make changes. "More than half of long term care residents do not receive regular visitors," says Kathy Walter, Volunteer Recruitment Supervisor. "By serving as the residents' voice, ombudsmen ensure that the residents receive good care, that their rights are protected and that they enjoy a good quality life." There is a strong need for committed, caring volunteers willing to speak out on behalf of the residents.

For information about the program or to learn how to get involved contact Kathy Walter at 1-800-522-2602.

## "People Like Us, Live!"

"People Like Us, Live!" which will answer everything you ever wanted to know about life with end-stage kidney disease.

"People Like Us, Live!" is a six-part workshop series which will address issues such as the different types of dialysis treatment available, transplantation, nutrition, coping, rehabilitations, sexuality and finances. The free workshops, to be held over the weekend of January 17th & 18th, 1998 in Portland, OR will be at Portland State University, Smith Center, adjoining rooms 290-292. The workshops are scheduled to run from 8:30am to 2:30pm each day and offered by the National Kidney Foundation of Oregon and Southwest Washington, are open to family members, as well as patients, and are free to all participants.

For more information, or to register for "People Like Us, Live!" call The National Kidney Foundation of Oregon and SW Washington at (503) 282-0990 or toll-free 1-888-3Kidney (354-3639).

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Portland  
Observer  
Call 503-288-0033

# How Much are You Willing to Lose?



## Ask yourself...

- Do you often gamble until your last dollar is gone?
- Do you ever gamble to escape worry?
- Have you ever lied to your family or friends to hide the extent of your gambling?
- Have you felt remorse after gambling?
- Are you reluctant to use "gambling money" for normal expenditures?

If you're nodding your head, you could have a gambling problem.

Problem gambling is a treatable illness & effective local treatment is available.

You're not alone.

Call  
**1-800-233-8479**

Sponsored by the Oregon Lottery and the Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation.