



HEALTH AWARENESS

National Free Screening For Vascular Disease

(NAPSA)—A national screening program could help save thousands of lives by diagnosing—and bringing attention to—one of the most undertreated health care concerns for older Americans.

Millions of Americans may have vascular disease without even knowing it, according to the American Vascular Association (AVA). Vascular disease outside the heart kills and cripples tens of thousands of Americans every year despite widely available noninvasive procedures to detect its most common forms: abdominal aortic aneurysm, peripheral arterial disease and carotid artery disease.

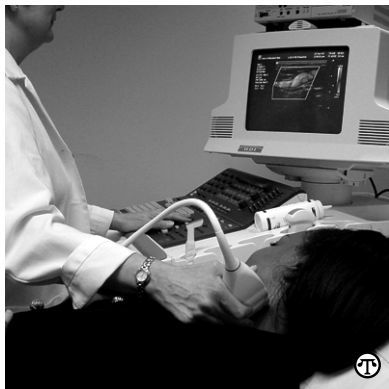
- Strokes due to carotid artery disease are the number one cause of disability in this country and the third leading cause of death.

- Abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAA), which affect 15,000 Americans each year, can be permanently cured when diagnosed early, but rupture is fatal in most cases. Congress recently passed legislation for select Medicare patients to undergo an AAA screening. The covered patient population includes men age 65 and over who have smoked more than 100 cigarettes in their lives, plus women with a family history of AAA.

- Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) may cause crippling leg problems and indicate an increased risk for stroke.

Certain conditions are associated with a higher risk of vascular disease, including hypertension, high blood cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, family history of vascular disease, previous heart or leg problem treatments and prior stroke.

AVA's 2006 National Screening Program will be held May 13 to 20



A simple screening can go a long way toward preventing complications from vascular disease.

in more than 250 cities across the country. The free tests for vascular disease are noninvasive, painless and simple. It is recommended that anyone over 55 with risk factors undergo a screening.

AVA created the National Screening Program in an effort to educate the public about major vascular problems, risk factors, prevention and treatment options. Each patient leaves the screening with a copy of his or her Vascular Report Card, completed on-site by a vascular specialist.

“Our national screening program will enable participants to know definitively their level of vascular health,” said Dr. William R. Flinn, Vice Chairman of AVA. “Early detection of vascular disease has great value and can significantly reduce the risk of disability and death.”

Anyone interested in undergoing a screening and learning more about vascular disease, the tests and treatments can call AVA toll-free at (877) AVA-2010 or visit www.vascularweb.org.