



Managing Diabetes And Medicare

(NAPSA)—There are nearly 20 million Americans diagnosed with diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association, and, of those, about 4.5 million have their health benefits through Medicare. If you or someone you care about is among them—or will be someday—there are a few facts you should know. Access to care and health care costs are a growing concern, especially with some important changes taking effect July 1 that may limit how beneficiaries get their much-needed diabetes testing supplies.

Under a new, national Medicare mail-order program, part of its Part B benefits, beneficiaries can have supplies delivered to their home only through a select number of contract suppliers; very select, in fact, as Medicare has reduced the number from about 300 to fewer than 20.

Fortunately, there are solutions for those wanting to keep medications and supplies all in one place. Perhaps the most viable and smart option may be to pick up your supplies at your pharmacy. There are several reasons.

A recent study found that pharmacist-led counseling programs for people getting certain diabetes medications improved medication adherence by 24 percent. Translation: There can be significant health benefits from spending more time talking with your pharmacist. So a regular trip to a pharmacy to pick up diabetes testing supplies can be a good opportunity to ask important questions or discuss any concerns related to managing diabetes. Your pharmacist is an integral part of your health care team and often the most accessible.

Here's what Medicare Part B beneficiaries need to know about the changes.



Your pharmacist can provide good advice along with your medications and supplies.

- Only select contract suppliers are eligible for reimbursement by Medicare for testing supplies sent to beneficiaries' homes. For the complete list, visit www.medicare.gov.

- Beneficiaries can pick up their supplies in person from a Medicare-enrolled pharmacy or supplier of diabetic testing supplies.

- There will be no difference in cost between using a Medicare-enrolled pharmacy that accepts assignment and one of the 18 Medicare contract suppliers.

One of the nation's largest Medicare-enrolled providers of diabetic testing supplies, Walgreens, provides direct billing through Medicare and other supplemental insurance plans and 24/7 access to pharmacy experts who can help. Given the complexities of Medicare and myriad changes under health care reform, talking with your pharmacist may be the best way to find out which solution is best for you.

Learn More

For further facts and advice, go to www.walgreens.com/Medicare.