

NEWS

FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Eye Screenings Covered For Medicare Recipients

(NAPSA)—A bit of Congressional foresight may help millions of seniors avoid a common, debilitating and preventable eye disease—glaucoma.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in the U.S. Those most at risk of contracting the disease (which affects tens of millions worldwide) are people over 60, African Americans and people with high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of glaucoma.



The disease strikes without warning and once it has progressed, glaucoma can not be cured. If the condition is caught early enough, however, it can be treated and stopped.

Yet despite the importance of early detection, few health insurance plans cover preventative monitoring for the disease. As a result, Congress recently passed a decision mandating that preventative glaucoma screenings be covered under Medicare. This test can now be done by your eye care provider.

The measure, which was strongly supported by the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus, will result in millions of Americans being covered for tests.

"We are at a fortunate time in the battle against glaucoma. Testing is quick and painless," says



Preventative screenings can help doctors stop glaucoma from causing blindness.

Bud Grant, president of the Glaucoma Caucus Friends Foundation. "Once identified, glaucoma can be effectively treated with eyedrops or, if necessary, surgery."

The next Caucus goal in dealing with glaucoma is to make preventative screenings available to all federal employees as an added health insurance benefit. In addition, the foundation will sponsor a study by glaucoma specialists "to further document the validity of screenings" and sponsor free glaucoma screenings across the country.

For more information, visit www.glaucomacongress.org or call (877) 611-4232.

Note To Editors: The measure was passed unanimously by Congress. Your Congressperson's name can be added to the story to localize it.