



Tour de Health By Stacy Fowler, M.S., C.P.T. www.mymedicare.gov

Hippocrates addressed the wisdom of prevention long before obesity reached epidemic proportions:

“All parts of the body which have a function, if used in moderation and exercised in labours in which each is accustomed, become thereby healthy, well-developed and age more slowly, but if unused, they become liable to disease, defective in growth, and age quickly.” - Hippocrates

Preventing disease is a top priority for the federal government. By taking ownership of our own health we can all prevent or delay the onset of many diseases. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have launched:

“A Healthier US Starts Here,” an initiative focused on motivating seniors and others with Medicare to make the most of Medicare’s Preventive Services.

The Medicare Prevention tour bus is set to visit the 48 continental States including our own State of Colorado. Festivities with community partners are planned in each state to showcase the prevention services that Medicare offers. Medicare, of course is health insurance for people who are aged 65 or older and for people under 65 who have disabilities. Many beneficiaries of the program are unaware that Medicare covers preventive screenings and other proactive services, sometimes at no cost. Some examples are:

- Free flu shots – but only 65% of beneficiaries take advantage of this service yet 36,000 people die each year of the flu
- Cardiovascular screenings
- Colorectal cancer screenings
- Mammograms
- Prostate cancer screenings
- Pap test and pelvic exams
- Bone mass measurements

Log on to www.mymedicare.gov to check out the full scope of services Medicare has to offer.

A healthy food diet and regular physical activity are pillars to optimal wellness.

Unfortunately, obesity has taken a toll on the overall health of many Americans and threatens to drastically increase future Medicare costs. The December 8, 2004 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association shows how those extra pounds measured in BMI (body mass index) will virtually double Medicare costs in the future. The reality is that \$900 per person per year can be saved in medical costs just by maintaining healthy body weight!

One of the goals of the Healthy People 2010 study was to reduce the prevalence of obesity among adults in the US to 15%. Unfortunately, the opposite has transpired. In 2005, three states had obesity rates greater than 30 % (Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia) and only four states (Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, and Vermont) had rates lower than 20%.

Coloradoans can celebrate our state's designation as "The Fittest State," according to statistics compiled by Trust for America's Health, an advocacy group that promotes funding for public health programs. Over 54% of our citizens are active on a daily basis -- ahead of the national norm of 49%. Despite our "fittest" designation, Coloradoans' waistlines increased in 2005:

- 36.7% of adult Coloradoans were overweight, versus 36.7 nationwide
- 17.8 % of adult Coloradoans were obese, versus 24.4% nationwide (remember the Goal 15%)

So, health-wise, we're holding our own here in Colorado. But we can do so much better! A Healthier U.S. will, indeed start here – but only if we all do our part to take ownership of our health. Log on to the Colorado Governor's Council for Physical Fitness website at www.shapeupchallenge.org and the President's Council on Physical Fitness website at www.presidentschallenge.org to learn how to get in shape and stay healthy. And join me in making a pledge – to prevent disease and take care of you!

I pledge allegiance to my body
And to the healthcare system of America
And to the Republic for which it stands
One body taken care of by me
With care and respect to all.
- *Coach Stacy*