

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Room 303-D
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201



Public Affairs Office

MEDICARE NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 10, 2004

Contact: CMS Public Affairs Office
(202) 690-6145

CMS IDENTIFIES SITES FOR MEDICARE DEMONSTRATION TO EXPAND COVERAGE OF CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

CMS Administrator, Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., today announced Medicare will conduct a demonstration project in Maine, New Mexico, Illinois and Virginia expanding coverage of chiropractic services for neuromusculoskeletal conditions.

“We recognize that many Medicare beneficiaries seek the services of chiropractors for back pain and other conditions,” McClellan said. “This demonstration provides the opportunity to evaluate whether expanding coverage of chiropractic services reduces overall Medicare expenditures for neuromusculoskeletal conditions.”

Beginning in April 2005, chiropractors that are located in the demonstration areas will be able to provide services to any beneficiary enrolled under Medicare Part B. The demonstration will expand coverage for the services that chiropractors provide for the care of neuromusculoskeletal conditions, including diagnostic and other services such as the provision of x-rays and therapy services.

Current Medicare coverage for chiropractic care is limited to manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation, which is defined as a malfunction of the spine. Treatment may only be provided for the active correction of a documented subluxation, and not for prevention or health maintenance. Treatment for the subluxation must be related in terms of a neuromusculoskeletal condition where there is a reasonable expectation of recovery or functional improvement.

The goal of the demonstration is to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of covering additional chiropractic services under Medicare beyond the current coverage. CMS has scheduled an Open Door Forum on November 18 to solicit input from interested groups regarding benefits of this demonstration and implementation of its budget neutrality requirements.

The demonstration, which was mandated under section 651 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act, will be conducted in the entire states of Maine and New Mexico, and in the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and 17 central counties in Virginia. The statute specified that the demonstration

must include four sites, two urban and two rural, and one site of each must be in a health professional shortage area (HPSA).

The statute requires an evaluation of the demonstration to assess cost effectiveness, cost benefit, beneficiary satisfaction, and other issues as the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines to be appropriate.

###