

## Improving Health And Saving Health-Care Dollars: Medical Nutrition Therapy Works

(NAPSA)—A recent government study says health-care spending in the United States will more than double over the next decade to \$2.8 trillion.

In an effort to address part of this projected leap in health-care expenditures, Congress has approved the first new Medicare Part B medical nutrition therapy benefit in 20 years. Outpatient coverage for nutrition counseling provided by registered dietitians is now covered for Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes and some types of kidney disease. This new benefit took effect January 1.

“In authorizing the new Medicare benefit, Congress has recognized that, for potentially lifesaving nutrition therapy for serious medical conditions, registered dietitians are the public’s best-qualified health providers,” said registered dietitian and American Dietetic Association spokesperson Cindy Moore.

A bill currently pending in Congress would further expand Medicare to include coverage of heart disease. There also is consideration of providing medical nutrition therapy for Medicare patients suffering from obesity.

“Through medical nutrition therapy, we can help keep people healthy and lower the nation’s health-care costs,” Moore said. “Dietetics professionals help people set realistic and achievable nutrition goals, create customized food plans and develop lifelong strategies for healthy eating.

“Medical nutrition therapy helps individuals improve their



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overall health and quality of life by reducing disease complications, reducing or eliminating the need for prescription drug use and decreasing hospital admissions.”

Medical nutrition therapy has the support of the country’s top health officials. According to Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, “By covering nutrition therapy, Medicare is helping beneficiaries lead healthier lives and avoid more serious illnesses and complications that can result from inappropriate diet.”

With nearly 70,000 members, the Chicago-based American Dietetic Association is the nation’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA serves the public by promoting nutrition, health and well-being.

To locate a registered dietitian in your area, call 800/877-1600, ext. 5000 or visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) and use the “Find a Dietitian” service located on the left side of the screen.