

**Subject: AFT Retirees Brings You: "DEAR MARCI"**

**Date:** Tuesday, June 23, 2009 3:37 PM

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**Conversation:** AFT Retirees Brings You: "DEAR MARCI"

**Dear Marci**

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**Medicare Rights Center**

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## "DEAR MARCI"

Your trusted source for Medicare answers.

**Volume 8, Issue 25: Week of June 22, 2009**

### ***This week in Marci:***

- **Dear Marci: Will Medicare pay for a stairlift and other home modifications?**
- **Get Resources: Resources for caregivers.**
- **Health Tip: In honor of Father's Day, keep dad healthy with preventive screenings.**
- **Survey Says: Study shows women lose some memory at start of menopause.**

To make sure you continue to receive our e-mails in your inbox (not bulk or junk folders), please add [dearmarci@medicarerights.org](mailto:dearmarci@medicarerights.org) to your address book or safe sender list.

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**Dear Marci,**

**As my parents have gotten older, I've been thinking more about how I need to be prepared to help care for them if they need me. What are the most important things for me to know to best care for their health?**

**– Raj (Minneapolis, MN)**

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Click on the blue, underlined [hyperlinks](#) for related information available through Medicare Interactive!

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Dear Raj,

You may have to bring up some uncomfortable topics with your parents, such as end-of-life issues and finances. While it may be difficult to have these discussions, it is important that you talk to your parents **before** they have a health crisis to ensure that they get the best possible care.

**To find out more about when [Medicare](#) will cover [durable medical equipment](#), go to [Medicare Interactive](#). You can also find out [where else you can go to get help paying for home modifications and assistive devices](#).**

–*Marci*

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**Looking for past Dear Marci Answers?** Have other Medicare questions? Find your answers with Medicare Interactive (MI), an independent, public resource of the Medicare Rights Center. MI offers expert information and advice on Medicare. [Visit Medicare Interactive today!](#)

**Do you need individual counseling?** Call the Medicare Rights Center’s consumer hotline at **800-333-4114**, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. A Medicare counselor will be happy to answer your question.

You can also call your [State Health Insurance Assistance Program \(SHIP\)](#) for personal counseling on Medicare benefits, rights and options. Call [Social Security](#) (800-772-1213) for questions about enrolling in Medicare or applying for Extra Help!

Feel free to [send comments](#) about *Dear Marci* or suggestions about topics you would like *Dear Marci* to cover.

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### **Health Tip of the Week**

In honor of Father’s Day and National Men’s Health Week, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is reminding providers and people with Medicare that colorectal and prostate cancer screenings are among the many preventive services covered by Medicare.

- Prostate cancer screenings can detect early prostate cancer, the [most common non-skin cancer](#) in America, affecting one in six men. Medicare covers one prostate screening a year (every 12 months) for men age 50 and older. This includes a Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test and a digital rectal exam. Medicare will cover these services more than once a year if your doctor says you need them for diagnostic purposes.
- Colorectal cancer is the [third most common cancer](#) diagnosed in both men and women in the United States, and regular screenings can help prevent serious illness. In Medicare, you must be 50 or older to be eligible for coverage of most colon cancer screenings, **except a colonoscopy**, for which there is no minimum age requirement.

To find out how Medicare covers [colorectal](#) and [prostate](#) cancer screenings, and which specific tests are covered, go to Medicare Interactive. You can also find out which other [preventive services](#) are covered.

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## **Survey Says**

A new study published in *Neurology* shows that there may be some truth in the belief that women's memories may diminish a bit during menopause. However, researchers point out that the setbacks are only temporary.

Researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles looked at more than 2,300 women, ages 42 to 52, over four years, giving them a series of tests to assess memory and learning capacity. They found that women in early and late perimenopause—the time leading up to menopause when women start to notice menopause-related changes plus the year after menopause—did not learn as well. However, the changes were subtle and learning capacity bounced back once women were fully in menopause.

"The good news is that when women are finished with the menopause transition and in steady postmenopause, cognitive performance, memory, learning, all that comes back to premenopause levels," Dr. Arun S. Karlamangla, an associate professor of medicine at UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine and the study's senior author told [HealthDay News](#).

You can find a summary of the study in [The New York Times](#).

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## **Spotlight on Resources**

You can find resources that support and advise caregivers on [Medicare Interactive](#).

[Caring.com](#) was created to help you care for your aging parents and loved ones. Their mission is to give you the information and resources you need to make better decisions, save time, and feel more supported.

For information about services and resources for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit the [National Association of Area Agencies on Aging](#).

For free one-on-one counseling and assistance with Medicare and related issues, contact your [State Health Insurance Assistance Program](#) (SHIP).

For help getting screened for benefit programs available to older adults with limited incomes, visit [Benefits Check Up](#).

View ratings and reviews of care and housing options for older adults at the [seniorDECISION](#) website.

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## **The Medicare Rights Center's Professional Hotline**

Do you help people with Medicare? Where do you turn to for help? Call the Professional Hotline, a national service offered by the Medicare Rights Center to support people serving the Medicare population. Dial 877-794-3570 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time for accurate, up-to-date information and ongoing technical support.

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## **Are you a caregiver in need of information?**

Check out the Medicare Rights Center's next FREE educational web seminar, "**Medicare Information for Caregivers**" to learn more about how Medicare works and what resources are available to you.

View of recording of this web seminar on [MedicareRights.org](http://MedicareRights.org).

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### **Spread the Word About Dear Marci!**

**Tell your friends, colleagues and clients to [sign up to receive Dear Marci](#)** and other Medicare policy and news updates from the Medicare Rights Center!

**[Subscribe](#)** to the Medicare Rights Center's other e-newsletters.

**Dear Marci** is a weekly e-newsletter designed to keep you—people with Medicare, social workers, health care providers and other professionals—in the loop about health care benefits, rights and options for older Americans and people with disabilities. *Dear Marci* is a free service of the [Medicare Rights Center](#).

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**The Medicare Rights Center** (MRC) is the largest independent source of Medicare information and assistance in the United States. Founded in 1989, MRC helps older adults and people with disabilities get high-quality, affordable health care.

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