“WELCOME TO MEDICARE” EXAM FACT SHEET

- CMS added a benefit under Medicare Part B for an Initial Preventive Physical Examination as of 1/1/05.
- This benefit is called the “Welcome to Medicare” exam- a one-time preventive physical exam within 6 months of a beneficiary’s enrollment under Medicare Part B.
- The “Welcome to Medicare” exam must include the seven service elements:
  - Review of medical and social history
  - Review of potential for depression
  - Review of functional ability and level of safety, including screening for hearing impairment and falls risk
  - Height, weight, blood pressure, visual acuity
  - Electrocardiogram
  - Education, counseling, and referral based on the preceding results
  - Education, counseling, and referral, including a brief written plan, regarding screening and preventative services separately covered by Medicare
- The “Welcome to Medicare” exam must be provided by a physician or “qualified non-physician practitioner” (physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist; not an audiologist).
- The final rule provides that hearing and balance screening tests are to be in the form of questions or questionnaires that must be recognized by a national medical professional organization.
- If the questions or questionnaire identify a hearing impairment or risk of falling, CMS acknowledges that additional services including counseling and referral may be warranted.
- Physicians or “qualified non-physician practitioners” will be reimbursed approximately $124.30 utilizing the codes G0344 (exam) and G0366 (EKG) for the “Welcome to Medicare” exam.

Suggestions for screening questionnaires to be used for hearing impairment and falls risk:

**Hearing:**


(The use of the whispered voice, tuning fork, finger-rub, ticking watch, or coin click tests by some physicians are not appropriate screening mechanisms.)

**Falls Risk and Balance Assessment:**