This month’s article will review Durable Medical Equipment (DME), and how it works with Medicare. If you have Original Medicare, DME is covered by Part B (medical insurance). If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, it covers everything that Original Medicare covers, but may have different costs and rules.

Medicare covers durable medical equipment that is:
- Durable (long-lasting)
- Used for a medical reason
- Not usually useful to someone who isn’t sick or injured
- Used in your home
- Has an expected lifetime of at least three years

There are a few steps to follow to insure Medicare covers your DME. First, your doctor must prescribe the equipment and certify that you will need to use the equipment in your home.

Next, you must get your DME from a Medicare Approved Supplier. You can find a Medicare-approved supplier by visiting www.medicare.gov/supplier.

If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you should contact your plan to find a certified supplier.

For those with Original Medicare, you pay 20% of the cost of the rental fee for 13 months, and then you are usually given ownership. If you are paying a monthly rental fee for your equipment, your supplier must perform all needed repairs and maintenance requiring the work of a professional—without charging you extra. If you own your equipment, Original Medicare will pay 80% of the Medicare-approved amount for repairs and maintenance, and you will be responsible for the 20% balance. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may pay a fixed rate or a coinsurance to rent or buy your DME. You will need to contact your Medicare Advantage Plan to learn about costs and coverage of DME.

Overall, it is important to follow either Original Medicare or your Medicare Advantage Plan’s rules to get your DME covered.

DME that Medicare covers includes, but is not limited to:
- Air-fluidized beds and other support surfaces (these supplies are only rented)
- Blood sugar monitors
- Blood sugar (glucose) test strips
- Canes (however, white canes for the blind aren’t covered)
- Commode chairs
- Continuous passive motion (CPM) machine
- Crutches
- Hospital beds
- Infusion pumps and supplies (when necessary to administer certain drugs)
- Manual wheelchairs and power mobility devices
- Nebulizers and nebulizer medications
- Oxygen equipment and accessories
- Patient lifts
- Sleep apnea and Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) devices and accessories
- Suction pumps
- Traction equipment
- Walkers

Who is eligible?
All people with Part B are covered

Your costs in Original Medicare
If your supplier accepts assignment, you pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount, and the Part B deductible applies. Medicare pays for different kinds of DME in different ways. Depending on the type of equipment, you may need to rent the equipment, you may need to buy the equipment, or you may be able to choose whether to rent or buy the equipment. Medicare will only cover your DME if your doctors and DME suppliers are enrolled in Medicare. Doctors and suppliers have to meet strict standards to enroll and stay enrolled in Medicare. If your doctors or suppliers aren’t enrolled, Medicare won’t pay the claims submitted by them.

It’s also important to ask your suppliers if they participate in Medicare before you get DME. If suppliers are participating suppliers, they must accept assignment. If suppliers are enrolled in Medicare but aren’t “participating,” they may choose not to accept assignment. If suppliers don’t accept assignment, there’s no limit on the amount they can charge you.
**SAS to Cut Back on Newsletter Mailings**

Seniors are Special’s membership continues to grow; currently, we have over 23,000 members, which is incredible news. However, the newsletter cost has become prohibitive, and we will no longer be able to mail every member a monthly newsletter. We are asking everyone that can receive our newsletter by email to do so. If you live outside Lubbock County, the newsletter will still be available, but only by email. Please email your email address to Peter.Laverty@umchealthsystem.com.

Please notify us of any changes in your address, or if you are receiving more than one copy. Also, please inform us of a name change, the death of a member, anything that might affect your mailing address. Information provided for our mailing list is kept confidential and for internal use only. Call 775-8760 with any changes.

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**SAS Membership Renewal Notice**

Seniors are Special is initiating a yearly membership renewal program. To help keep our mailing list up to date, we are asking our members to fill out and return this form to Seniors are Special by December 30. All renewal forms received between now and December 31, will continue receiving their newsletters throughout 2017. If you receive your newsletter by email, you are not be required to return this form.

Name: _____________________________________________________________________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________________________________________

City: __________________________________________ State _____________ Zip code:__________________

Please mail this form to : SAS, 602 Indiana Ave., Lubbock, TX. 79415

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**UMC EMS & LFR Begin Use of Priority Dispatch**

Lubbock Fire Rescue and UMC EMS are improving the way they respond to 9-1-1 medical emergencies. Beginning later this month, the partner agencies will start using medical priority dispatch, which is designed to better utilize resources and increase safety for the public and first responders.

For the past decade, an ambulance and fire truck responded to every medical emergency in Lubbock, with warning lights and sirens sounding. Under medical priority dispatch, first responders will be dispatched this way only in truly life-threatening situations. While each call for medical help will be answered immediately, in some cases first responders will arrive without lights and sirens and with normal flow of traffic.

“Responding to emergencies is a leading cause of death and injury for both firefighters and EMS personnel, and when there is a collision involving emergency vehicles and civilian vehicles, there are almost always civilian injuries,” said Lance Phelps, chief of LFR. “Utilizing the medical priority dispatch system will allow us to reduce the risk of accidents for first responders and our citizens by traveling without lights and sirens when response time is not critical to patient outcome.”

Medical Priority Dispatch was developed in the 1970s and is used internationally today. Dispatchers use a sophisticated question-and-answer system to quickly analyze the severity of the medical emergency and then send resources appropriately.

“All UMC EMS dispatchers have been certified in the use of this program,” said Jeff Hill, UMC vice president, support services. “Questions are asked in a standardized format, which is scientifically supported and continually validated by an international body of medical experts. This will ensure patients receive the response they need, and resources are available to handle urgent calls that may come in later.”

To help explain what medical priority dispatch means to our community, UMC and LFR have produced a short video, available on UMC Health System’s Facebook page and YouTube channel.

UMC Health System is ranked among the top 10% of hospitals in the nation for patient experience by HealthGrades, and has consistently ranked among the best places to work in Texas by the Best Companies Group. More than 500,000 patients a year choose UMC.
UMC Physicians Opens Diabetes & Urgent Care Centers

UMC Physicians is proud to announce the grand opening of several new clinics during the month of August. Two of these clinics, The Urgent Care Center at UMC and the UMC Diabetes Center, are located at the new MOP II building located at 808 Joliet Avenue, just east of UMC Hospital and south of the Medical Office Plaza.

- **Urgent Care Center at UMC**
  808 Joliet Ave Suite 130
  Lubbock, TX 79415
  806-761-0545
  Hours of Operation –
  Monday – Friday, 9am – 9pm;
  Saturday 9am – 5pm;
  Sunday 1 – 5pm
  Providers
  Ronda Barr, DO
  J’Lin Stewart, FNP-C
  The Urgent Care Center at UMC provides on-campus urgent care as an alternative to the Emergency Center (EC). If a patient arrives at the EC with an urgent medical need rather than an emergency issue, EC providers may refer patients to this urgent care clinic. For the convenience of the patients who arrive at the EC first, there will be a shuttle taking patients between the EC and Urgent Care.

- **UMC Diabetes Center**
  808 Joliet Ave Suite 120
  Lubbock, TX 79415
  806-761-0540
  Hours of Operation –
  Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm
  Providers
  Robert Bisbee, MD
  Krystal Glover, FNP-C
  Ashley Shell, MSN, RN, APRN, FNP-C
  UMC Diabetes Center is open to all diabetic patients. Patients will receive focused care for their condition so that they are able to better manage their diabetes care. You may call the office to schedule an appointment or to learn more about the educational classes offered at this location.

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### Emergency Center OR Urgent Care Center

**What’s the difference?**

- Emergency centers focus on treating severe & life-threatening conditions whereas urgent care centers focus on treating urgent & minor emergency patients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiencing Pain</th>
<th>Experiencing Fever</th>
<th>Experiencing Bleeding</th>
<th>Major Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it in an area where pain is common?</td>
<td>high fever</td>
<td>Is it controllable?</td>
<td>vomiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>ear ache</td>
<td>severe head injury</td>
<td>cold/flu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>sore throat</td>
<td>severe eye injury</td>
<td>poisoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>severe abdominal pain</td>
<td>headache</td>
<td>unconsciousness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>painful urination (U/P)</td>
<td>skin (needs stitches)</td>
<td>persistent diarrhea</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Emergency Center or Urgent Care Center**

- Emergency Center
- Urgent Care Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intestines</th>
<th>Skin (needs stitches)</th>
<th>Vaginal (during pregnancy)</th>
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Taylor Fox, MPAS - SAS Guest Speaker

Taylor Fox will present a program on Osteoporosis, a nationally recognized disease, which is defined by one’s bone density becoming lost and/or breaking off. Taylor will explain why someone’s bones become super fragile and porous and can get to a point where they can easily snap or break from becoming brittle.

Taylor is a Physician Assistant at TTUHSC Department of Orthopedic Surgery in Lubbock TX. She assists in running the Osteoporosis Clinic as well as evaluating and treating new and established orthopedic patients. Taylor serves as a preceptor for premedical, PA and MD students and is a guest lecturer for the PA program at Texas Tech in Midland. Mrs. Fox graduated from Texas Tech University with an undergraduate degree in Business followed by a Masters in Physician Assistant Studies at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. She actively participates in medical research and community outreach activities.

Taylor will present her program on September 14 during the SAS monthly Medical Seminar at McInturff Conference Center. The seminar is held from 3:00 – 5:00pm and is free to the public.

J’Lin Stewart & Christian Gross - SAS Guest Speakers

Join SAS at the September medical seminar, as J’Lin Stewart and Christian Gross introduce you to UMC’s Urgent Care Center. The Urgent Care Center opened last month and is located in the new Medical Office Plaza Two, on the South East corner of UMC Hospital. They will introduce you to their services and explain when it is best to use UMC Urgent Care Center and when it is best to use UMC Emergency Center.

For additional information, their offices can be reached at 761-0545.

UMC’s Better Breathers Club to meet at UMC Activities Center

The UMC Better Breathers Club is a support group for people with Chronic Lung Disease such as COPD, Asthma, Pulmonary Fibrosis and Lung Cancer. Joining is free! Learn to manage your lung disease and live better. The Better Breathers Club meets the second Monday of every month from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the UMC Activities Center at 5217 82nd Street, 82nd & Slide in Rockridge Plaza. Our next meeting will be Monday, September 12th. This month’s guest speaker is Dr. David Trotter; clinical psychologist TTUHSC will be speaking on anxiety and depression with pulmonary disease.

For additional information, contact Lori Stroud at 775-8950.

HEARING AND BALANCE CENTER AT UMC OFFERS DISCOUNTS TO SENIORS ARE SPECIAL MEMBERS

Dr. Amber Caldwell, Au.D., CCC-A;
Dr. Marcy Lau, Au.D., CCC-A;
Dr. Loradee Van Wettering, Au.D., CCC-A;
Jeanne Stone, B.S.; Courtney Arnold, B.S.;
Dr. Gina Flores, Au.D., CCC-A

Hearing loss and hearing related concerns may not be something that is noticed overnight. Many times, a gradual onset and progression of hearing difficulty is the case. The Hearing and Balance Center at UMC and “Seniors are Special” understand the value and necessity of optimal hearing for communication, social interaction, and simply listening to sounds in your home.

The Hearing and Balance Center at UMC would like to extend a 15% DISCOUNT on HEARING AIDS to all UMC Seniors are Special Members. This offer will apply to any single or pair of hearing aids you choose. If you are experiencing:

- Difficulty hearing other people’s voices
- Ringing in one or both ears
- Fullness or pressure in one or both ears
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Or your current hearing aid is not working well for you any longer.

To comply with new Medicare policies, your primary care physician will need to call the Hearing and Balance Center at UMC at (806) 775-9305 to authorize a hearing evaluation or hearing aid consultation with one of our certified audiologists.

SAS DIRECTORY

Seniors are Special
602 Indiana Avenue
Lubbock, Texas 79415
806.775.8760
Peter.Laverty@umchealthsystem.com

UMC Activities Center
5217 82nd Street, Ste 128
Lubbock, Texas 79424
806.783.8829
Lewis.Walker@umchealthsystem.com
Fall is slowly making its way onto the South Plains. Soon nights will be cooling off and the mornings will have brisk chill to them. The leaves will start changing colors, and we will be consumed with the hustle and bustle that comes with the changing season. With all that is happening this season, fall is a great time to talk about “Falls Prevention Awareness.”

Falls Prevention Awareness Day is a day to raise awareness about how to prevent fall-related injuries in older adults. This year it is being observed on September 22nd, the first day of fall.

Did you know?
• Every 11 seconds, an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury.
• One-third of Americans aged 65+ falls each year.
• Falls result in more than 2.8 million injuries treated in emergency departments annually
• In 2013, the total cost of fall injuries was $34 billion.

There are many myths about falls and older adults. Let’s explore a few:

**Myth 1:** Falling is something normal that happens as you get older.
**Reality:** Falling is not a normal part of aging. Strength and balance exercises, managing medications, vision checks and making your environment safer are all steps you can take to prevent a fall.

**Myth 2:** If I limit my activity, I won’t fall.
**Reality:** Performing physical activities will help you stay independent, as your strength and range of motion benefit from remaining active. Social activities are also good for your overall health.

**Myth 3:** As long as I stay at home, I can avoid falling.
**Reality:** Over half of all falls take place at home. Fix simple but serious hazards such as clutter, throw rugs, and poor lighting. Add grab bars in the bathroom, second handrail on stairs and non-slip paint on outdoor steps.

**Myth 4:** Muscle strength and flexibility can’t be regained.
**Reality:** While we do lose muscle as we age, exercise can partially restore strength and flexibility. It is never too late to start an exercise program.

**Myth 5:** I do not need to talk to family members or my health care provider if I am concerned about my risk of falling.
**Reality:** Fall prevention is a team effort. Bring it up with your doctor, family, and anyone else who is in a position to help.

**Myth 6:** I don’t need to talk to my parent, spouse, or other older adult if I’m concerned about their risk of falling.
**Reality:** Let them know about your concerns and offer support to help them maintain the highest degree of independence possible. There are many things you can do, including removing hazards in the home, setting up a vision exam, reviewing medication with them, and helping them find appropriate physical activity.

Take control of your health: **6 Steps to Prevent a Fall**

1. Find a good balance and exercise program
2. Talk to your health care provider
3. Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist
4. Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses
5. Keep your home safe
6. Talk to your family members
   (www.ncoa.org)

While you enjoy the beauty of the season, remember to take care of yourself and the ones you love and educate them on fall prevention. The UMC Activities Center is here to help. Our class in the spotlight, T’ai Chi Chih has been shown to improve balance and increase strength. In honor of Falls Prevention Awareness Day, guest fees will be waived for individuals wanting to try T’ai Chi Chih on September 22nd.

**Class Spotlight:** The class under the spotlight this month is **T’ai Chi Chih with Larry** on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 AM. A mix of gentle movements that focus on balance and the circulation of energy or chi. The class involves slow, continuous, circular, shifting movement to stimulate inner energy chi flow. May be performed standing or sitting. Intensity Level: Low

**T’ai Chi Chih** may be ideal for individuals looking to improve their strength, balance, sleep or for a mind-body experience without having to get onto the floor. A study from Emory University showed people older than 70 years old who practiced a form of T’ai Chi had 47.5 percent fewer falls than those who did not. It is believed to be because in T’ai Chi Chih one is constantly shifting their weight forward and back and even some side to side. Building strength in your feet, ankles and legs improving coordination and nerve and muscle communication (hs.edu). Try **T’ai Chi Chih with Larry!** In honor of Falls Prevention Awareness Day, guest fees will be waived for T’ai Chi Chih on September 22nd.
Seniors Are Special’s Monthly Seminar
Wednesday, September 14, 2016
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
McInturff Conference Center at UMC

Lifestyle Topic: 3:00 PM
J’Lin Stewart, FNP & Christian Gross
– Administrator
UMC Urgent Care Center
“Urgent Care Center or Emergency Center”

Medical Topic: 4:00 PM
Taylor Fox
“Osteoporosis an Aging Issue”

Refreshments provided between speakers.

Join us for Seniors are Special’s monthly educational seminars. These seminars meet on the second Wednesday of each month beginning at 3:00 PM in UMC’s McInturff Conference Center. The meetings are free, open to the public, and no reservations are necessary. Please bring a friend. For further information on these meetings, call SAS at 806-775-8760.

Shuttle transportation service is available from Tech’s southwest parking lot for SAS’s monthly meeting

UMC’s Courtesy Shuttle vans provide free shuttle service between 2:30 PM and 3:30 PM and 4:15 PM to 5:15 PM for our seminar guests. The shuttle picks up at the Texas Tech parking lot located SOUTH WEST of the Texas Tech Parkway, off 10th Street. Turn west at the 10th Street & Texas Tech Parkway light. The parking lot is located one block down on your left hand side of the street. Follow the SAS parking signs. You are, however, free to park in any of UMC’s parking lots.