

Patient Education Letter on Avastin Reimbursement Issue

Dear (insert patient name),

Due to a recent change in Medicare payment policy for Avastin, we may no longer have the option to treat wet macular degeneration with this drug. On October 1, 2009 Medicare decreased the payment to physicians for Avastin to significantly below what it costs us to obtain the drug. Unfortunately, this will make it difficult to use Avastin to treat wet macular degeneration.

There is another similar drug called Lucentis that we can use to treat wet macular degeneration. However, Lucentis costs about \$2000 per dose. Although Medicare accepts this cost and covers the Medicare portion of the cost of Lucentis, the copayment by you would be about \$400. Please note that the previous Medicare payment for Avastin was about \$45, with a copayment of \$8. For patients currently being successfully treated with Avastin, this policy change may force a change to therapy that may or may not be as effective. For those currently treated with Lucentis, the choice of patients and physicians to switch to Avastin will be impaired.

If you agree with us that Medicare should not restrict our choice of treatment or force you and your doctor to have to consider choosing a \$2000 drug, instead of a much less expensive drug, you should contact Medicare to express your concerns. Without complaints and feedback from those Medicare patients concerned about or hurt by the policy change, Medicare won't know this payment policy change is a problem. To notify Medicare on the issue please call **1(800) Medicare** (800 633-4227). Medicare tracks the calls made to this number by patients and if they see a significant trend they can move to change policy. See the attached instructions for how to call Medicare using this number.

Sincerely,

(insert doctor name and signature)