

Groups call for medicare coverage of lung cancer screening

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CT scans for high-risk seniors covered by private insurers, but Medicare not required to do so.

(HealthDay)—Medicare should cover low-dose computed tomography lung cancer screening for people at high risk for the disease, a coalition of more than 60 patient and medical groups says.

The coalition, which includes the Lung Cancer Alliance, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the American College of Radiology, the American Cancer Society and the American Society of Clinical Oncology, made its point in a letter sent Monday to the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Such screening reduces lung cancer deaths, works well in people older than 65 and has been shown to be cost-effective, the coalition stated.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends low-dose CT

screening for adults aged 55 to 80 at [high risk](#) for lung cancer.

"This vital new screening tool is required by law to be available to most individuals with commercial insurance, but not those covered by Medicare. It's time to extend coverage to all who may benefit from screening," Dr. Richard Wender, chief cancer control officer of the American Cancer Society, said in an American College of Radiology news release.

Laurie Fenton Ambrose, president and chief executive officer of the Lung Cancer Alliance, said, "We are pleased the larger cancer community has joined us in calls for Medicare coverage for CT lung [cancer screening](#). This is an important day for seniors and for CMS."

Dr. Douglas Wood, immediate past president of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, added that "the infrastructure is in place to help ensure the quality, safety and consistency of these exams. Medicare just needs to provide coverage to support these efforts and help physicians save lives."

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more about [lung cancer screening](#).

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