



## Relevant Washington Facts<sup>i</sup>

### State Medicare Information

- There are 1,190,127 total Medicare beneficiaries in the State of Washington, which represents 16.8 percent of the total population.
- Washington Total Annual Medicare Spending equals \$7,971,000,000

### Documented Shortage of Primary Care Health Professionals

- According to the Health Resources and Services Administration , Washington has 155 total primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA).
- More than 1,291,662 of Washington residents (18.2 percent) live in a primary care HPSA. The national average is only 12 percent.
- There are 420 licensed audiologists in the State of Washington who could help.

### Hearing Loss Statistics

- Of the more than 36 million Americans who experience hearing loss, 30 percent are 65-74 years old and 47 percent are 75 years old and older.
- Washington has 871,000 residents with hearing loss, which represents 12.3 percent of the state population.
- Untreated hearing loss results in a greater occurrence of other physical and mental conditions in elderly patients, substantially reducing the quality of life for older adults and increasing Medicare spending. Treated hearing loss enhances the quality of life and reduces health care costs.

### National Data on Older Adult Falls

- Every 18 seconds, an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall.
- The average hospitalization for a fall costs \$17,500 and the direct medical cost for falls in 2010 was \$30 billion.
- Among older adults (those 65 or older), falls are the leading cause of injury death. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.
- Elderly falls are preventable as are their associated financial and societal costs. Audiologists reliably diagnose and treat the vestibular disorders and help prevent older adult falls.

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<sup>i</sup> Sources: [http://www.betterhearing.org/pdfs/Kochkin\\_MarkeTrak8\\_OctHR09\\_hr.pdf](http://www.betterhearing.org/pdfs/Kochkin_MarkeTrak8_OctHR09_hr.pdf); Kaiser Family Foundation, [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org); HealthResources and Services Administration, [www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html](http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html); Vestibular Disorders Association, <http://vestibular.org/node/10>; Safety of audiology direct access for Medicare patients complaining of impaired hearing (Zapala, 2010), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20701834>; Screening for vestibular disorders: A study of clinicians' compliance with recommended practices (Polensek, Sterk, Tusa, 2008), <http://www.medscimonit.com/download/index/idArt/855748>