Promoting a “Community Wellness” Program

From time to time, ecp will publish selected images to illustrate how various tests and treatments are being marketed to the public. Our goal is to inform our clinician readers of the kinds of messages that their patients may be receiving. These messages may stimulate demand for various services and/or distort expectations about the benefits (and harms) of the services. Readers are encouraged to submit their own examples for publication.

Here we feature a “community wellness” program that encourages consumers to schedule their own screening tests for aortic aneurysms and arterial occlusion of the carotid artery and the lower extremity. The company sets up mobile test centers at such places as churches, golf courses, and fire stations.

FIGURE. Direct-to-consumer promotion of screening for carotid disease, abdominal aortic aneurysm, and peripheral arterial disease (front of hand-out).
The listed charge of $40 is well below Medicare’s estimate of cost (over $300 for either abdominal or carotid ultrasonography). Whether this price reflects savings from the economies of scale or subsidization from other sources is unknown.

The company is based in Cleveland (with offices in Arizona, Kentucky, and Florida). Its president is a vascular surgeon.