

MEDICARE CHANGES

Beginning in January, an older person who goes to the hospital under Medicare will be responsible for the first \$60 of his hospital bill — now running about \$750 for the average stay by a Medicare beneficiary.

The present hospital deductible is \$52 and will remain in effect for all Medicare hospital admissions during the remainder of the year.

"The increase is mandatory under the law," Robert M. Ball,

Commissioner of Social Security, said. "It is a result of the long term upward trend in hospital costs, and in part, of course, the general inflation."

"The Administration," he said, "has been working hard to bring inflation under control and has also been working with the professional health community, health insurance organizations and others so that the Medicare program and general consumers, too, will get full value for each health care dollar spent."

In announcing the new \$60 deductible, Commissioner Ball explained that the law requires an annual review of hospital costs under Medicare and an adjustment of the portion of the bill for which a Medicare beneficiary is responsible, if these costs have risen substantially. The law provides a formula for determining the amount of any adjustment in the deductible amount.

Based on 67 million days of hospitalization covered by Medicare bills in 1969, the current average per diem rate for inpatient hospital services amounted to \$55.70 compared to a rate of \$37.94 for the base year of 1966. Applying the formula, i.e., multiplying the ratio of the 1969 rate to the 1966 rate by \$40, the result is \$58.72, which must, under the law, be rounded to \$60, the new deductible amount.

The hospital deductible amount, Commissioner Ball explained, is intended to make the Medicare beneficiary responsible for expenses equivalent to the average cost of one day of hospital care.

It is like the deductible amounts specified in many auto insurance policies where the car owner pays the first \$50 or \$100 on a repair bill, and the insurance policy covers the rest.

Ball said that when the hospital deductible amount changes, the law requires comparable changes in the dollar amounts that a Medicare beneficiary pays toward a hospital stay of more than 60 days, or a posthospital extended care stay of more than 20 days.

When a Medicare beneficiary has a hospital stay of more than 60 days, he will pay \$15 a day for the 61st through the 90th day, up from the present \$13 per day. If he has a posthospital stay of over 20 days in an extended care facility, he will pay \$7.50 per day toward the cost of the 21st day through the 100th day, up from the present \$6.50 per day.

If he needs to draw on his "lifetime reserve", the reserve of hospital days a beneficiary can draw upon if he ever needs more than 90 days of hospital

care in the same benefit period, he will pay \$30 for each day used, instead of the present \$26 per day.

BOB JONES DISC AND DATA

Hollywood . . . Mary Wilson, my favorite Supreme, called when she returned to town to advise me that The Supremes first single, since Jean Terrell joined the group, just passed the million sales mark. The Supremes, Cindy, Jean and Mary, are back in town following quite an extensive concert tour that carried them through Texas, Georgia and Florida. The girls returned to Las Vegas on Nov. 19 to do their thing at the Frontier Hotel for two weeks; which incidentally, was their second Las Vegas appearance within ten weeks. As a matter of fact, The Supremes are such a big draw in Las Vegas that Frank Sennes tried to snag them to open at the Desert Inn for another three-week engagement beginning Christmas eve; however, the girls prefer to spend their holidays in sunny Cali-

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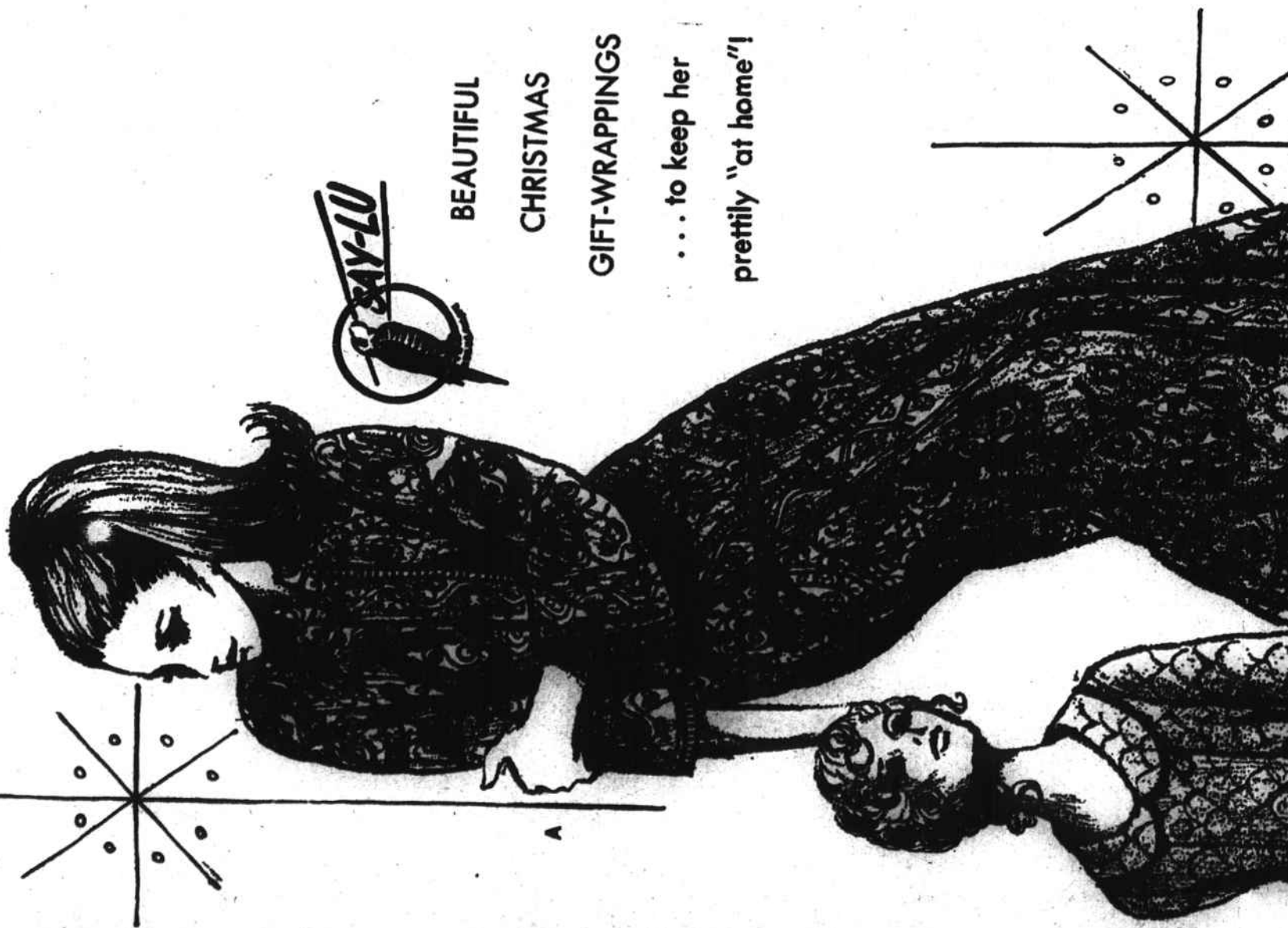
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