A Resolution regarding Continuous Glucose Monitors and Their Use by Blind People

WHEREAS, Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs) are crucial for the effective management of diabetes, significantly reducing the need for fingerstick blood tests, which are particularly invasive for blind people who rely on their tactile sense for reading Braille and performing other tasks; and

WHEREAS, the majority of CGMs come with reader devices that are not accessible to blind people, as these devices provide output solely in a visual format, thereby excluding blind people from independently monitoring their blood glucose levels; and

WHEREAS, Medicare mandates the purchase of a reader device before approving sensor coverage, placing a financial burden on blind people who cannot use these readers, forcing them to seek alternative, often less accessible means to access their CGM data; and

WHEREAS, Medicare's policy of allowing the replacement or upgrade of CGM devices only once every five years limits access to technological advancements that could offer significant health management improvements for people with diabetes, particularly affecting those who are blind; and

WHEREAS, the reliance on smartphone technology for accessing CGM data, while beneficial for some, excludes those who cannot afford such technology or lack the skills to use it, further limiting the independence of blind people in managing their diabetes; and

WHEREAS, the resolution of these issues requires the attention and action of several entities, including CGM manufacturers, Medicare, private insurance companies, and regulatory bodies; Now, therefore:

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri, in Convention assembled this thirteenth day of April, 2024, in the City of Kansas City, Missouri, urges manufacturers of CGM devices to prioritize the development of reader devices accessible to blind and low-vision people, ensuring these essential health management tools are usable by all who need them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri calls upon Medicare to reevaluate its policies regarding the upgrade and replacement of medical devices such as CGMs, to ensure that technological advancements are accessible to beneficiaries, particularly those with vision loss, based on functional improvements rather than arbitrary time constraints; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be forwarded to relevant authorities, including Medicare, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to advocate for policy changes that reflect the needs of blind people; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to our national Resolutions Committee for consideration at our 2024 National Convention.