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The Association Responds to Puckrein et al., “Impact of CMS Competitive Bidding Program on Medicare Beneficiary Safety and Access to Diabetes Testing Supplies: A Retrospective, Longitudinal Analysis”¹

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (March 18, 2016) – The American Diabetes Association has been actively involved in discussions and advocacy efforts surrounding the implementation of the Medicare Competitive Bidding Program (CBP), which includes the National Mail-Order (NMO) Program for diabetes testing supplies, on beneficiaries with diabetes since the first pilot round began in 2011. The CBP is intended to save Medicare and beneficiaries money via lower prices and smaller coinsurance, respectively. However, savings for Medicare and beneficiaries must be balanced by ensuring access to the appropriate and necessary testing supplies.

The Association is concerned that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ (CMS) monitoring of the impact of the CBP on beneficiaries with diabetes has not been sufficiently robust. To address this issue, the Association has recommended ways to augment the information CMS tracks to better assess if patients’ disease management needs are being met. The Association has met numerous times with CMS staff, including the Medicare Competitive Acquisition Ombudsman, to discuss issues involving beneficiaries with diabetes and to advocate that the beneficiary protections in the program be implemented in a meaningful way. Additional beneficiary protections aimed at preserving choice of testing supplies were implemented as part of the nationwide rollout of the CBP for mail-order diabetes testing supplies, which began in July 2013 and followed the original nine-area pilot.

The Association has also provided suggestions to the Office of Inspector General (OIG), which provides oversight of the Medicare program, for its recently launched national study of beneficiary access to Durable Medical Equipment under the CBP. Those recommendations have focused on filling important information gaps to better understand the impact of the now nationwide NMO Program and to address the need for a more comprehensive look at the impact of the NMO on beneficiaries with diabetes. We urge the OIG to perform an in-depth analysis of the CBP and its impact on beneficiary health, and to consider Puckrein et al.’s findings. We eagerly await the official OIG report, expected later this year, and the additional light it will provide on the program’s impact on access to necessary supplies and the health of beneficiaries with diabetes.

About the American Diabetes Association

The American Diabetes Association is leading the fight to Stop Diabetes[®] and its deadly consequences and fighting for those affected by diabetes. The Association funds research to prevent, cure and manage diabetes; delivers services to hundreds of communities; provides objective and credible information; and gives voice to

¹ Puckrein et al. Impact of CMS Competitive Bidding Program on Medicare Beneficiary Safety and Access to Diabetes Testing Supplies: A Retrospective, Longitudinal Analysis. *Diabetes Care*. doi:10.2337/dc15-1264. Published online before print March 18, 2016. <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/early/2016/01/29/dc15-1264>.



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those denied their rights because of diabetes. Since 1940, our mission has been to prevent and cure diabetes, and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. For more information please call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or visit diabetes.org. Information from both these sources is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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Our Mission is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

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