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Medicare Coverage of Low Vision Devices

For decades, the vision loss community has been advocating for Medicare's coverage of assistive technologies, particularly low vision devices. Currently, Medicare will not pay for any device that happens to use a lens, regardless of whether such device incorporates any other features. They also will not cover video magnification.

Now, for the first time, federal legislation may begin to change this unacceptable national policy by establishing a nationwide Medicare demonstration project to evaluate the fiscal impact of a permanent change in Medicare coverage to pay for low vision devices. The legislation would initiate a five-year demonstration project that would put low vision devices in the hands of Medicare beneficiaries who, after a clinical evaluation by an ophthalmologist or optometrist, can benefit from a low vision device and for whom such devices are medically necessary.

Once the legislation is enacted and the demonstration project is successfully completed, Congress will have significantly richer data upon which to consider changes to the Medicare program to make coverage of low vision devices, especially the most costly devices, a permanent feature of the program. Precisely how many individuals will receive low vision devices and how many physicians across the country will participate in the demo project will need to be determined by CMS, working in consultation with stakeholder groups, as it develops and implements the project. The legislation makes \$12.5 million available for the project over five years.



Advocates are encouraged to contact their members of the U.S. House of Representatives and urge them to co-sponsor H.R. 3749.

Window-Eyes

Free Computer Program for the Visually Impaired

GW Micro and Microsoft Corp. have partnered to make **Window-Eyes** available to users of Microsoft Office at no cost. **Window-Eyes** is a screen reader that enables people who are blind, visually impaired, or print disabled to have full access to Windows PCs and makes the computer accessible via speech and/or Braille.



As the population ages, technologies like **Window-Eyes** will become more and more important as the number of people with age-related macular degeneration and other retinal degenerative diseases increases. This technology will help millions of people gain access to their PC and providing it free of charge will open a whole new world of assistive technology to many people.

Eligible customers, using Microsoft Office 2010 or higher, will be able to download a full version of Window-Eyes at www.WindowEyesForOffice.com. The website provides download instructions as well as additional details about this offer.

Visit us on the web at www.ViewFinderLowVision.com

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Our doctors also see patients at several satellite offices throughout the state of Arizona
Please call our toll free number 866.924.8755 or 480.924.8755
to schedule an appointment at one of these offices