

June 14, 2007

Barry Straube, MD  
Chief Medical Officer  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
Director, Office of Clinical Standards and Quality  
Room S3-25-25  
Mail Stop S3-02-01  
7500 Security Blvd  
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Dear Dr. Straube:

Although the undersigned organizations represent a broad array of constituents and issues, we share the common link of a strong concern about the increasingly devastating impact of diabetes upon America. This impact of diabetes is felt across all regions and all populations, but continues to be particularly pronounced among America's ethnic minorities and its elderly. We are particularly committed to ensuring that all Americans served by Medicare are educated about and are taking advantage of the diabetes prevention and screening benefits that are available to them under Medicare.

As we work to achieve these goals, we are pleased to offer a suggestion for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to consider in your process of developing the 9<sup>th</sup> Scope of Work (SOW) for the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs). We believe that the QIO program plays a significant role in ensuring high quality services to Medicare beneficiaries, and QIO involvement in prevention for diabetes and other chronic diseases is critical at this time – a time when our health care system must make major changes to better meet the needs of an aging population with increased prevalence and incidence of chronic illness.

Specifically, we write to ask that you utilize QIOs in the upcoming 9<sup>th</sup> SOW to improve the utilization of the Medicare diabetes screening benefits, as well as the other preventive benefits that are currently underutilized. The QIO program represents the largest coordinated federal investment in improving health care quality in the United States, and these organizations are perfectly poised to help us better respond to the diabetes epidemic. The QIOs have also proven well-versed on diabetes in the past, having achieved great results in the 7<sup>th</sup> SOW in working with providers to improve diabetes care.

Although America's seniors need immediate assistance in accessing and utilizing the preventive benefits offered by Medicare, we also want to ensure that there is a long-term strategy to ensure that these benefits are accessed by all beneficiaries who need them, especially as our country continues to age.

As you may know, in 2006 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a report about QIOs which states that “the QIO program must become an integral part of strategies for future performance measurement and improvement in the health care system.” To this end, as we and others seek to truly move Medicare to a preventive model of health care, we hope that you utilize QIOs in this endeavor.

Respectfully,

American Association of Diabetes Educators  
American College of Physicians  
American Diabetes Association  
American Dietetic Association  
Columbus Research Foundation  
Healthcare Leadership Council  
Novo Nordisk Inc.  
Vision Service Plan