



December 1, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor, State of California
 State Capitol
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT for Medi-Cal Coverage of Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) Systems

Dear Governor Newsom:

In light of the conclusion of National Diabetes Awareness Month, we are writing to respectfully urge your SUPPORT of Medi-Cal beneficiaries' diabetes access to continuous glucose monitors (CGMs). CGM access will:

- ❖ Eliminate health care inequities for economically disadvantaged patients.
- ❖ Lower risk of COVID-19 complications, especially among ethnic minorities.
- ❖ Improve patient outcomes with proactive technology.
- ❖ Relieve General Fund budget pressures by generating tangible health care savings.
- ❖ Reduce strain on health care providers through CGM telehealth capabilities.

Diabetes is a growing epidemic in our state. Approximately 3 million Californians (1 out of every 7 adults) have diabetes, and 247,000 new patients are diagnosed every year. Without

proper care and monitoring, diabetes patients are at increased risk of blindness, limb amputation, kidney failure, and heart disease. Public and private medical spending for diabetes exceeds \$27 billion annually.

COVID-19 increases the severity and costs. Diabetes-related COVID-19 complications account for 30 percent of all coronavirus hospital admissions, and are the second leading cause of pandemic deaths. California's minorities are dying at disproportionately higher rates than the general population because of lower health care and access.

CGMs are currently authorized under Medicare and Medicaid in 40 of the 50 states. We respectfully urge your support of Medi-Cal coverage of CGMs to:

- **Protect our economically disadvantaged and minority populations.** Medi-Cal patient incomes are limited to 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. With significantly higher diabetes and COVID-19 risk among ethnic minorities, does it make sense to withhold care from those who run the highest risks, but are least able to afford the care they need?
- **Eliminate health care inequities.** Lack of Medi-Cal authorization creates a two-tiered health system where private insurance patients have access to CGMs and Medi-Cal patients do not. Medi-Cal authorization would ensure that treatment is determined based on patient condition and not the patient's bank account.
- **Improve patient outcomes.** CGMs proactively help patients avoid hospitalization and disease progression that leads to blindness, limb amputation, and kidney and heart disease. Prevention increases survival rates and is vastly more cost effective.
- **Relieve General Fund pressures.** Annual Medi-Cal treatment for adults with diabetes runs approximately \$3.6 billion, or 14 percent of total Medi-Cal spending. CGMs lowered hospitalization by more than 70 percent, which would generate savings of \$55 million to \$66 million each year.
- **Reduce the strain on our health care system.** CGM remote monitoring capabilities increase care quality and expand access, allowing health providers to reach more patients. Telehealth also reduces COVID-19 exposure and strain on our health care system.

The significance of National Diabetes Month is to promote hope and empowerment for individuals with diabetes. Clearly, CGMs are essential to empowering individuals with diabetes – allowing them to effectively monitor and manage their health. We ask simply that they be provided the tools they need.

The listed organizations respectfully urge your support for Medi-Cal coverage of continuous glucose monitors for diabetes patients and ask that you continue efforts in your administration

to develop coverage policies so all Medi-Cal beneficiaries have access to a life-changing device.

Sincerely,

Advanced Medical Technology Association (AdvaMed)
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Diabetes Association
Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists (California Coordinating Body)
Beyond Type 1
Biocom
California Black Health Network
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
California Chronic Care Coalition
California Life Sciences Association
California Retailers Association
Children's Specialty Care Coalition
Children With Diabetes
College Diabetes Network
Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition
DiabetesSisters
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
Diabetes Leadership Council
Taking Control of Your Diabetes
T1D Exchange
The diaTribe Foundation

cc: Richard Figueroa, Deputy Secretary, Governor Gavin Newsom
Adam Dorsey, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance