

# BETTER DIABETES MANAGEMENT

## Raising Awareness Of Coverage Is Key To Curbing Diabetes Epidemic

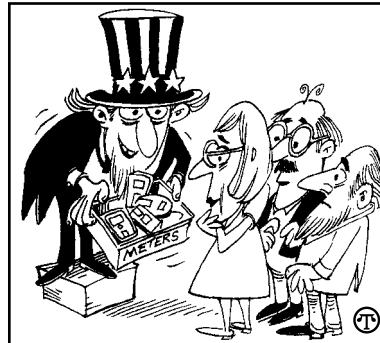
(NAPSA)—Diabetes is an emerging epidemic according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Affecting sixteen million Americans, deaths from the disease have increased 30 percent since 1980—in part because people are not properly managing their diabetes to prevent or delay complications. One reason is cost: controlling diabetes can be expensive.

That's why 44 states have now passed laws requiring private insurance companies to cover diabetes testing supplies, medication and education. In addition, Medicare and Medicaid provide similar benefits.

Despite the availability of state and federal diabetes coverage, many people are unaware or misinformed about their benefits. For example, a 1999 survey of Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes (the most recent year data are available), showed that more than half (52 percent) didn't know that their Medicare coverage allowed them to choose any brand or model of blood glucose meter and test strips—an essential tool for regularly monitoring blood glucose levels.

People with diabetes who have Medicare Part B coverage should be aware that:

- Reimbursement for blood glucose meters and test strips is available regardless of the way they treat their diabetes (i.e., insulin, oral medication or dietary management).
- Medicare covers all brands of blood glucose testing supplies, regardless of manufacturer.
- Qualified Medicare beneficiaries do not have to pay more than 20 percent of the Medicare-approved price for testing supplies after the annual Part B deductible.
- When Medicare beneficiaries purchase supplies from a pharmacy that takes assignment, they only pay a 20 percent co-pay. When making purchases at pharmacies that don't accept assignment, beneficiaries pay full price at purchase but are later reimbursed 80 percent of the cost by Medicare.



**Taking advantage of existing state and federal diabetes insurance coverage to better control diabetes can save money and lives.**

Uncontrolled, diabetes can lead to nerve damage, kidney failure, blindness, even death. Fortunately, doctors say it's possible to prevent or delay complications by regularly testing and controlling blood sugar levels.

That's why the American Diabetes Association recommends that many people with diabetes test their blood sugar as often as three or four times per day. This provides key information to help make adjustments to diet and medication as necessary.

Thanks to state and federal insurance coverage, more people with diabetes now have access to these important management tools than ever before—including the latest advancements in blood glucose monitoring technology.

For example, the new ONE TOUCH® Ultra Meter provides an alternative to the painful fingersticks of traditional blood sugar testing. It requires such a small drop of blood that people can test on their arm where there are fewer nerve endings, making testing significantly less painful for most people. The meter also provides accurate test results in just 5 seconds—the fastest test time of any meter available.

To learn more about state and federal insurance coverage for diabetes, call 1-800-DIABETES or visit [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).

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*Editor's Note: This is the seventh in a series of ten stories on the management of diabetes, a disease affecting nearly 16 million Americans.*