

# American Council of the Blind Commends U.S. House of Representatives

*For Introducing Legislation to Cover Low Vision Aids under Medicare*

ARLINGTON, VA, USA, December 18, 2013 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) and Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) have introduced H.R. 3749, the Medicare Demonstration of Coverage for Low Vision Devices Act of 2013. This bill seeks to right a wrong that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have perpetrated for many years through the denial of coverage of low vision devices for Medicare recipients. CMS has elected to very narrowly interpret the regulations so that devices that have one or more lenses are treated the same as eyeglasses.



Kim Charlson, President of the American Council of the Blind (ACB) said, "These tools are often essential for individuals with low vision who, without the aid of assistive technology, cannot read prescriptions, medicine bottles, and other important materials containing content that is vital to their personal health and safety as well as read their mail, pay bills, etc."

Without the aid of such assistive devices, many more individuals will be forced into assisted living facilities as our population ages. Seniors on fixed incomes often find the cost of such devices burdensome and therefore are unlikely to be able to afford to purchase them on their own.

This legislation seeks to do the following.

- Individuals would be eligible to participate in the demonstration project only after completing a low vision exam performed by a physician who would then deem a low vision device as medically necessary.
- It would allow reimbursement for certain low vision devices that cost five-hundred dollars or more as durable medical equipment.
- The legislation would evaluate, through a five-year national demonstration project administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, the fiscal impact of a permanent change to the Social Security Act.

The national demonstration project is designed to provide a rich, well-structured and defined

data set that can yield Medicare-program-wide evidence-based conclusions using appropriate statistical methods.

## About the American Council of the Blind

The American Council of the Blind is the largest consumer-based organization of blind and visually impaired Americans advocating for the rights of blind Americans. Comprised of more than 70 affiliates across the United States, the organization is dedicated to making it possible for blind and visually impaired Americans to participate fully in all aspects of American society. For more information, visit [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org); write to American Council of the Blind, 2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 650, Arlington, VA 22201; phone (202) 467-5081; or fax (703) 465-5085.

Eric Bridges

American Council of the Blind

(202) 467-5081

[email us here](#)

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