

*John Clymer:* Thank you, John Laughner. Now, we will turn our attention briefly to the executive branch, specifically to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Alison Smith is Program Director of Target BP, The American Heart Association and American Medical Association joint initiative to control blood pressure. She is going to tell us about an initiative to remove a cost barrier to self-manage blood pressure Medicare beneficiaries. Alison?

*Alison Smith:* Thank you, John. And thank you for the opportunity to be with you for a moment to share an important update on a collaborative effort that is underway to better align the evidence we have for care with health policy for patients with hypertension. In October of 2022, the American Heart Association and the American Medical Association submitted a joint request to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for Medicare benefit category determination for self-measured blood pressure devices.

This request emphasized the evidence supporting SMBP, and specifically how SMBP devices meet the five requirements to qualify as durable medical equipment. The request has been denied because they don't believe SMBP devices meet one of the DME requirements, namely, quote, "That the item must be used useful to a person for the treatment of an illness or injury. And they expect it to make a meaningful contribution to the treatment of the individual's illness or injury," unquote.

So we will point to the evidence indicating that patients do independently take action based upon the data provided by the SMBP device, specifically regarding daily medication adherence choices, and daily lifestyle choices that directly impact blood pressure, two cornerstones of hypertension control. We have an opportunity to testify on May 31, and everyone has the opportunity to submit public comment by May 31, urging the CMS committee to reverse its decision. We would be grateful for your public comments.

We will provide more details as soon as possible on the submission deadline, the submission process as well as some specific guidance on the more nuanced points, emphasizing the actions that patients take based on SMBP measurements. In addition to the obvious value of this information to providers, to clearly support the specific requirements for DME coverage. The National Forum has graciously agreed to share this information with all of you as soon as it's available. And we welcome your support to make SMBP devices accessible to patients with Medicare as a tool to help manage their hypertension. So I want to thank you in advance for

your collaboration, and ask for you to stay tuned for more information. Thank you.

*[End of audio]*