DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Health Care Financing Administration

7500 SECURITY BOULEVARD
BALTIMORE MD 21244-1850

MAY 4 2001

Mr. Lewis Golinker, Esq.
Director
Assistive Technology Law Center
202 East State Street, Suite 507
Ithaca, New York 14850

Dear Mr. Golinker:

I am responding to your April 25, 2001 letter regarding "Computer-and PDA-Based AAC Devices (SGDs)". Your letter requests that "HCFA eliminate potential confusion regarding the coverage of these devices by revising the National Coverage Decision on Speech Generating Devices, CIM Section 60-23 (Nov. 30, 2000)."

Based on an internal HCFA review of CIM (Coverage Issues Manual) Section 60-23 and a telephone conversation between you and two members of my staff (Walt Rutemueller and Lynn Riley) on April 25, 2001, we are all in agreement that CIM Section 60-23 does not require a revision. However, to ensure that the policy is interpreted consistently by all parties mentioned in your letter ("DMERC medical directors", "Medicare + Choice providers", and "Medicaid" agencies), as well as beneficiaries, we are providing the following interpretive clarification of the CIM policy:

> **Computer-based and PDA-based AAC devices/speech generating devices are covered when they have been modified to run only AAC software.**

I hope that this clarification eliminates any potential confusion regarding the coverage of speech generating devices.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Hoyer
Director
Chronic Care Policy Group
Center for Health Plans and Providers

cc: Paul Hughes, M.D., DMERC Region A

Adrian Oleck, M.D., DMERC Region B
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