**Resolution 2021-01: Regarding the Need for Ophthalmologists and**

**Other Medical Professionals to Inform Newly Blind People of the Benefits of**

**Rehabilitation Services**

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines us or our future, but many members of the general public do not believe or understand this principle; and

WHEREAS, too many medical professionals, such as ophthalmologists and optometrists, hold the same misconceptions about the capabilities of blind people as does the rest of society; and

WHEREAS, newly blind people frequently become frustrated because they cannot find information about how to adjust to blindness and have not been exposed to the positive philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind; and

WHEREAS, since ophthalmologists and optometrists are already treating newly blind people, they could provide such information but rarely do because they view blindness as a failure of their practice; and

WHEREAS, diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in adults, and diabetes requires medical care from endocrinologists and other medical professionals who could also improve the quality of life and independence of their patients by giving them information about rehabilitation services but frequently fail to do so; and

WHEREAS occupational therapists also have direct contact with people losing vision; and

WHEREAS, the best way to change the attitudes of medical professionals towards blindness is to influence their specialized training programs, such as reaching out to the directors of all medical schools in the State of Ohio: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio in Convention assembled this sixth day of November, 2021, that this organization strongly urge the directors or governing bodies of medical schools and graduate programs of occupational therapy in the State of Ohio to work with the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities to develop a resource list of rehabilitation services for blind patients and to encourage their students and graduates to distribute this information so that newly blind people learn to live the lives they want; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization urge Ohio medical schools, the Ohio Ophthalmological Society, the Ohio Optometric Association, the Ohio Occupational Therapy Association, and the Ohio River Region Society of Endocrinology to work with the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio to ensure that medical professionals are taught that they have an obligation to inform their patients about adjustment to blindness resources and the benefits of the positive philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind.