

ACT NOW: Protect Your Medicare Benefits!

Please call your Congressional Representative at 202-224-3121. Feel free to use the following talking points:

"I am on Medicare. I am calling to ask that the Congressman (*or Congresswoman*) to co-sponsor H.R. 3790, which is a budget neutral repeal of durable medical equipment competitive bidding program.

H.R. 3790 will achieve the same savings without needlessly closing 90% of medical equipment company providers – of which most are small businesses - and limiting Medicare beneficiaries' access to care.

I want to continue to receive:

- The reliable and experienced company that I choose
- The brand products that my doctor prescribes
- Timely services that my doctor and I rely on

Thank you"

Dear Valued Customer,

In 2008 Congress delayed a flawed government bidding program for Medicare home medical equipment providers.

The initial roll-out of the bidding program last year produced disastrous results for the home medical patients and for providers (mostly small businesses) that were unfairly excluded from Medicare as a result of the first round of bidding.

As a result, Congress enacted MIPPA, which included a delay and reform of the bidding program in order to improve the process, establish quality measures, and make other reforms.

Before the passage of MIPPA the program was in place for two weeks. Numerous problems were encountered including:

- Disruption to patient services – Patients were forced to go to multiple, unfamiliar providers for different items and services;
- Greater costs to Medicare due to longer hospital stays – Due to delayed hospital discharges, unnecessary emergency room visits, patient confusion and disruption.
- Erroneous disqualifications – Nearly two-thirds of accredited providers that submitted bids were disqualified based on CMS errors and non-substantive reasons;
- Non-local providers – Providers with no history of servicing a geographic region or no business operations in a bidding area were awarded contracts;
- Inexperienced/unlicensed providers – Providers were awarded contracts for equipment and services they had never provided before or that they were unlicensed to provide;
- Many providers refused to offer equipment and new technologies that were prescribed;
- Many providers refused to make same day deliveries and service calls and;
- Desperation bidding – Structural flaws in the bidding program caused providers to submit artificially low bids because they were faced with the threat of losing their businesses if not awarded a contract. Winning contracts were viewed as commodities that could be sold.

Unfortunately the program is restarting, but there is a new bi-partisan, budget neutral bill that will give Medicare the same savings without compromising patient access to quality products and services.

The bill is H.R. 3790, which will repeal the competitive bidding program. With your help, H.R. 3790 will be enacted, and we can continue to serve the patient community and save the government tens of millions of dollars in administrative costs.

In October of 2009 Medicare required every home medical equipment provider to obtain accreditation and to purchase a \$50,000 surety bond for all company locations. These quality and anti-fraud measures have removed the great majority of unqualified companies from the marketplace. The bidding program goals of reducing providers and lowering reimbursements have been achieved.

Please contact Congressman (*Congresswoman*) _____ at the following number _____ and ask for his (*her*) health legislative assistant. Sample talking points are included within this letter.

Thank you