



Monday, December 08, 2008

Take Action Now!

President-elect Obama, along with HHS Secretary Nominee Tom Daschle and other Congressional officials are working aggressively towards a health care reform package. To gain support at the grass-roots level, Obama and Daschle are asking Americans for their input by encouraging them to “host meetings to talk about reform” (see *Los Angeles Times* article below).

The health care reform train is leaving the station. Providers are urged to join the grass-roots efforts to ensure that repealing the oxygen cap and the competitive bidding program are priorities in the discussions about health care reform. Work with your state association to coordinate a meeting with fellow providers, and invite beneficiaries, referral sources, hospitals, doctors and most importantly, your senators and Congressional representative. If your Congressional members cannot attend, be sure to invite their staff. The goal should be to have a DME “health care reform” meeting in each Congressional district in your state.

To obtain your Congressional members’ contact information:

1. Visit the VGM DC Link at www.vgmdclink.com.
2. Under “Find your Officials” on the middle of the page, enter your ZIP Code and click on “Go.” This will redirect you to a Web page with a list of both your Congressional legislators and your State legislators.
3. Click on one of your Congressional legislators. This will take you to your legislator’s bio.
4. Click on “contact.” Contact information for both the DC office and the district office(s) will come up.

Upon arranging a meeting with your fellow providers and state association, be sure to visit Obama’s transition Web site and sign up to host a “community discussion,” where DME industry concerns may be addressed. The “discussions” will take place from Dec. 15 – 31. For more information and to sign up, [click here](#).

For talking points about the new payment rules for oxygen [click here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact John Gallagher at john.gallagher@vgm.com or Jamie Blomme at jamie.blomme@vgm.com

Obama team seeks your input on healthcare reform

Borrowing a community organizing technique, the incoming administration is asking Americans to host meetings to come up with ideas. They'll send discussion packets to anyone who signs up.



(Noam N. Levey, The Los Angeles Times, 12/6/08)

Reporting from Washington — Former Sen. Tom Daschle, in his first major speech since being asked to head President-elect Barack Obama's healthcare reform effort, on Friday announced a nationwide campaign this month to solicit public input on improving the nation's healthcare system.

The plan -- asking Americans to host meetings to talk about reform -- appears designed to avoid the appearance that the new administration is developing a sweeping agenda behind closed doors.

That perception is widely believed to have helped doom the Clinton administration's healthcare reform efforts in the early '90s, when then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton led a months-long task force that wrote the administration's legislation.

"We want an open process," Daschle told a healthcare forum convened in Denver by Sen. Ken Salazar (D-Colo.).

In Washington, Democratic officials have been meeting privately for weeks to develop legislation, which senior lawmakers hope to unveil in early January, to reshape the country's healthcare system, a longtime goal of the party.

Obama, Daschle and others -- including Massachusetts Sen. Edward M. Kennedy -- envision an effort by the federal government to ensure that all Americans get health coverage, to bring down healthcare costs and to improve the quality of care.

Daschle, a former majority leader whom Obama has asked to be Health and Human Services secretary, said Friday that the transition team would send discussion packets to any American willing to host a house party in the last two weeks of December.

He said he would attend a meeting himself, and invited Americans to sign up for the events at the transition website, www.change.gov.

Some 10,000 people, many of them already involved in grass-roots efforts to push healthcare reform, have submitted comments on the website, according to Daschle.

The Obama team's maneuver builds on organizing techniques pioneered by liberal grass-roots groups like MoveOn.org and deployed by Obama during the presidential campaign.

It also reinforces the message that Obama has delivered since his election, that he intends to take aggressive steps to tackle the issue despite the worsening economic situation.

"President-elect Obama has made health reform one of his top priorities," Daschle said. "And I'm here to tell you that his commitment to changing the healthcare system remains strong and focused."

New Competitive Bidding Rule at OMB for Clearance

VGM has learned that the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding rule is now at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for final clearance. The rule appears to be an interim final rule with a comment period (see



abstract below). As of today, it is not known when the rule will be published. VGM will notify its members when the rule is published.

AGENCY: HHS-CMS

RIN: 0938-AP59

TITLE: Limited Changes to the Competitive Acquisition of Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS)(CMS-1561-IFC)

STAGE: Interim Final Rule

ECONOMICALLY SIGNIFICANT: No

**** RECEIVED DATE:** 12/05/2008

LEGAL DEADLINE: None

Abstract: This interim final rule as mandated by section 154 of MIPPA requires the temporary delay of Round 1 of the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program such that a new competition occurs excluding certain services. Section 154 of MIPPA establishes other requirements for the program such as providing a process for giving suppliers feedback on missing financial documents and mandating the disclosure of subcontractors under a competitive bidding program. Section 154 also mandates additional refinements to be implemented before phasing in future rounds of the program.