

April 3, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Request for Suspension of Medicare Competitive Bidding Program

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned members of United Spinal Association's Access and Care Coalition write to formally request that the COVID-19 response package currently being developed by the U.S. Congress include a postponement of the Medicare Competitive Bidding Program scheduled to begin on January 1, 2021 with rates and contracts to be announced as early as this summer. The Access and Care Coalition has raised concerns with Congress and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services about restricted patient access to Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) under Medicare's Competitive Bidding Program before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The mission of the Access & Care Coalition is to counter restricted consumer access to medical supplies under Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance. The Access & Care Coalition consists of urological and ostomy medical technology suppliers and manufacturers, as well as clinician, physician, and consumer and disability advocates. Our coalition members have had long-standing concerns that the competitive bidding program for DMEPOS limits access, choice, and quality of care. Postponing competitive bidding, especially for non-invasive ventilators at this critical time, will be a crucial step towards ensuring access to this life-saving technology at a time when Federal, State, and local governments and the private sector should prioritize increasing access as much as possible.

Especially now, at this time of the global pandemic known as COVID-19, we believe it is critical to direct the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to suspend the Medicare Competitive Bidding Program, especially with the inclusion of non-invasive ventilators (NIVs), at the earliest possible opportunity. As the coronavirus pandemic continues to impact American life, we understand that the vulnerable populations we represent and serve are at high risk, and many individuals with paralyzing neuromuscular conditions, such as spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, ALS, and individuals living with chronic conditions, including ostomies, and other diagnoses already live in dire need of sustained access to life-saving respiratory devices and corresponding clinical services and needed medical supplies.

We strongly recommend that Congress take decisive action by passing legislation to suspend the next round of the competitive bidding program, especially the inclusion of non-invasive ventilators and related supplies. All potential barriers to critical medical supplies must be lifted in order to protect Medicare beneficiaries and to ensure a robust and protected supply chain.

Sincerely,

Access and Care Coalition Signatories (listed on page 2)

American Association for Homecare
American Urological Association
Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Coloplast
Cure Medical
Hollister
Simon Foundation for Continence
Spina Bifida Association
Teleflex
United Ostomy Associations of America
United Spinal Association
Wellspect Healthcare
Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society