



Caring that Feels Right at Home

Press Release

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CONTACTS: Michael Reinemer, 703-535-1881, michaelr@aahomecare.org
Tilly Gambill, 703-535-1896, tillyg@aahomecare.org

November is “National Homecare Month”-- American Association for Homecare Urges Patients and Family Members to Help Save Homecare

Current and Planned Regulations Threaten Homecare Quality and Availability

ARLINGTON, VA., November 16, 2009 ---- During November – National Homecare Month – the American Association for Homecare celebrates the thousands of dedicated professionals who provide cost-effective and consumer-preferred homecare. Thanks to home medical equipment and service providers, millions of seniors and people with disabilities will share Thanksgiving and other holidays with their families in the comfort of their homes.

Homecare provides tremendous value to more than eight million Americans who require some type of medical care in the home. A cost-effective alternative to institutional care, home medical equipment can be provided and maintained for just dollars a day, which is why homecare is an important part of the solution to our nation’s healthcare crisis.

Over recent years, however, the homecare sector has been the target of a long series of deep and disproportionate cuts by Congress. These cuts have a negative impact on the ability of homecare providers to furnish high-quality equipment and services to the people who require them.

In honor of National Homecare Month, the American Association for Homecare urges homecare patients, their families, and care providers to speak up for homecare and call or email their members of Congress and ask them to “Please stop cuts to homecare.”

To learn more about how you can help save homecare, please visit:
www.aahomecare.org/athome.

Five Facts about Homecare

- 1) Among the eight million Americans who depend on medical equipment and services at home are people with severe lung disease such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), multiple sclerosis, Lou Gehrig’s disease, spinal cord injuries, congestive heart failure, and diabetes.
- 2) In numerous surveys, Americans have expressed a strong preference for receiving medical care at home if possible.

American Association for Homecare
2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 725, Arlington, VA 22202
703-836-6263 www.aahomecare.org

- 3) Virtually every type of health care short of surgery can be performed in the home. If medically necessary, seniors and people with disabilities can receive oxygen therapy, wheelchairs, hospital beds, drug infusion therapy, hospice care, walkers, and other medical services, supplies, and equipment at home under Medicare.
- 4) A robust system of home medical providers who compete on the basis of quality and service allows hospitals to discharge patients on a timely basis to quality post-acute care at home, which reduces length of hospital stays and lowers spending in the healthcare system. The home is the most cost-effective setting for many types of medical care including long-term care. This is why the federal government encourages state Medicaid systems to rebalance their long-term care populations so a greater proportion of beneficiaries receive care at home rather than in a nursing home or other institutional setting. Home-based care should be a larger part of healthcare reform discussions for federal and state policymakers.
- 5) In the event of a catastrophic pandemic flu, home-based care will play a large role in treating flu victims who require care since the surge in patients will quickly overwhelm hospitals. The American Association for Homecare served on an expert panel that provided guidance for “Home Health Care during an Influenza Pandemic: Issues and Resources,” which was produced with funding by the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response and in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control.

The American Association for Homecare represents durable medical equipment providers, manufacturers, and other organizations in the homecare community. Members serve the medical needs of millions of Americans who require oxygen equipment and therapy, mobility assistive technologies, medical supplies, inhalation drug therapy, home infusion, and other medical equipment and services in their homes. The Association’s members operate more than 3,000 homecare locations in all 50 states. Visit www.aahomecare.org.