



**The Medicare Access to Complex Rehabilitation
and Assistive Technology Act of 2007**

The American Association for Homecare seeks enactment of the Medicare Access to Complex Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Act of 2007. HR 2231 was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Tom Allen (D-Maine) and Representative Ron Lewis (R-KY) in May 2007. If Congress passes this bill, access to the appropriate complex rehab technology will be preserved for the most vulnerable within the Medicare population.

Background: The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) established a national competitive bidding program for durable medical equipment. Round one of the competitive bidding program began in May 2007 and affected 10 product categories, including complex rehabilitative power wheelchairs and related accessories, in 10 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The program will expand to 70 additional MSAs in 2009 and affect eight product categories, which will also include complex rehab products and accessories. After 2009, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will expand the program to additional areas and items. Including complex rehab equipment in the competitive bidding program will restrict access to quality of care and product choice for those Medicare beneficiaries with complex rehabilitation needs.

- The competitive bidding program, as currently being implemented, does not adequately address the difficulties imposed by serious injury or disease, or the sophisticated equipment and services that are required to improve the lives of people with severe disabilities.
- Complex rehab technologies are custom-configured items and require extensive customization for each patient. These technologies are not commodity-type items. Congress specifically exempted all prostheses and most orthoses from competitive bidding due to customized nature of these items and services.
- The competitive bidding program does not account for the level of services and significant costs associated with the delivery of complex rehab technology to people with severe disabilities.
- Rehab equipment, customized by a licensed professional, has a significant role in providing beneficiaries with the ability to maintain their independence and in preventing or delaying potential medical complications which can increase health care costs significantly.
- Significant savings is not likely to be achieved by including complex rehab technologies in competitive bidding. CMS has acknowledged that the complex rehab product category is small. Moreover, new Medicare HCPCS coding, coverage and payment allowables have dramatically reduced utilization for these items and services, thus, reducing the likelihood of significant savings while at the same time raising the prospect of access issues.

Ask your member of Congress to support the Medicare Access to Complex Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Act of 2007 by signing on as a co-sponsor of the bill. Also, urge Senators to introduce companion legislation in the Senate.