



Caring that Feels Right at Home

July 26, 2010

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the American Association for Homecare (AAHomecare), I am writing to express our strong support for delaying implementation of Section 3136 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) by one year in a budget neutral manner. Section 3136 is currently scheduled to eliminate the beneficiary first-month purchase option for standard power wheelchairs on January 1, 2011. We understand the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has scored the one year delay at less than \$50 million, which would require a one percent reduction in the update to standard power wheelchairs.

AAHomecare is the national trade association representing health care providers and manufacturers, in more than 3,000 locations, that serve the medical needs of Americans who require mobility assistive technologies such as power wheelchairs, oxygen equipment and therapy, medical supplies, inhalation drug therapy, home infusion, and other home medical equipment, services, and supplies. The Association, along with its membership, continues to advance the value and practice of quality health care services in the home.

AAHomecare strongly supports the need for a one-year delay for the following reasons:

- Many providers are currently unable to secure the capital/credit necessary to cover the up-front cost of acquiring the power wheelchair while waiting 13-months to receive full payment.
 - Banks are unwilling to loan money due to the unpredictability of the Medicare program and the risk associated with 13 months of billing.
 - Lines of credit cannot be secured based on unsecured payments from the federal government.

This change, if not implemented over time, will put this largely small business segment of the health care sector out of business considering the current national economic environment where even medium and large providers are unable to secure necessary lines of credit.

- Providers unable to obtain financing and prepare for this change will stop providing power wheelchairs, resulting in a loss of jobs, economic revenue, and beneficiary access to a physician-prescribed power wheelchair, which is especially concerning in rural and underserved areas.

The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Charles Grassley
Page 2
July 26, 2010

- The timelines, guidelines and documentation requirements for the provision of a power wheelchair are significantly different from those required for other capped rental equipment. Additional guidance and implementation time is needed in order to transition to this significant change in a manner that will not jeopardize access to care.
- Furnishing power wheelchairs to Medicare beneficiaries saves the program millions of dollars a year by allowing vulnerable beneficiaries to remain safe and independent in their homes and communities. Without access to power wheelchairs, thousands of beneficiaries would face increased hospitalizations, home health visits and other clinical services due to falls or other injuries that occur to those with compromised mobility. In addition, power wheelchairs often delay or alleviate the need to place an individual in a long term care facility.

At the first legislative opportunity, the Association urges Congress to delay for one year the implementation of Section 3136 in a budget neutral manner in order to provide more time for the providers of power wheelchairs to secure credit and prepare for implementation of this significant change in the provision of physician-prescribed mobility products and services.

AAHomecare appreciates your consideration of this important request. If you have questions, please contact me or Jay Witter at (703) 535-1884.

Sincerely,



Tyler J. Wilson
President