



**United Spinal  
Association**



1660 L Street NW, Suite. 510, Washington D.C. 20036, (301) 995-4460 (V), (202) 223-2380

July 16, 2010

Dear xxx:

The United Spinal Association and the National Spinal Cord Injury Association urges you to reverse the harmful provision in the health reform bill (H.R. 3590) that takes away Medicare beneficiaries' option to purchase power wheelchairs when initially prescribed. The legislation eliminates the purchase option for most power wheelchairs. This provision has a significant impact on the ability of providers to continue providing high quality items and services to Medicare beneficiaries.

Under the new law, beneficiaries will be required to rent their power wheelchairs for 13 months before they can be purchased. This has the potential to harm people who rely on power wheelchairs. Power wheelchairs can require hundreds of adjustments to uniquely fit each person who use the wheelchair. When a wheel chair is rented and not purchased the supplier does not have the incentive to rent the best wheelchair or make expensive adjustments when that power wheelchair is being rented and not purchased. If the proper adjustments are not made secondary conditions such as pressure sores can be created costing Medicare and the beneficiary much more money and time.

We are advocates for people with disabilities, not wheelchair suppliers, but unless the current language is changed dedicated suppliers will be driven away from the power wheelchair market out of financial necessity. As the number of suppliers decreases, so too will the availability of necessary repair and maintenance services. The diminished market for advanced technology will hasten research & development efforts and stall the progress of an industry.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Paul J. Tobin in black ink.

Paul J. Tobin  
President and CEO  
United Spinal Association

Handwritten signature of K. Eric Larson in black ink.

K. Eric Larson  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Spinal Cord Injury Association

**United Spinal Association**

United Spinal Association is a nonprofit organization with members in all 50 states that was formed by paralyzed veterans in 1946. Throughout its history, United Spinal Association has dedicated its energy and talents to improving the quality of life for Americans with spinal cord injuries and disorders. United Spinal Association is also a VA-authorized veterans service organization serving veterans with disabilities of all kinds.

**National Spinal Cord Injury Association (NSCIA)**

Formed in 1948, NSCIA is the nation's oldest and largest civilian organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Americans living with the results of spinal cord injury and disease (SCI/D) and their families, from the onset of injury or disease and throughout all the stages of life. We provide information and referrals to individuals with SCI/D, their families, and their service providers and connect people with our more than 50 chapters and support groups nationwide.

Spinal Cord Advocates

A Public Policy Collaborative of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association and United Spinal Association