



Supporting Quality Health Care Services at Home

Special Alert

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Message from AAHomecare President & CEO Tom Connaughton

Competitive Bidding in House Bill – Congress Still Needs to Hear From YOU

Though it appeared last week that competitive bidding would not be part of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's bill, it is currently included in draft legislation. Both the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Ways and Means Committee –which both share jurisdiction over Medicare – agreed to mark up virtually identical bills starting today that would contain competitive bidding provisions. We have reviewed the proposed legislative language, and although addressing some of our concerns, it is still unacceptable. We do expect, however, that the bills will move through both committees, then be combined and passed by the House. This bill is not expected to be taken up by the Senate, and is expected to die. Another bill, which will probably pass, will be put together by both the House and Senate this September.

It is important that we continue calling, writing, and meeting with legislators. Call now and let your Congressman know that you are opposed to any legislation that contains competitive bidding. The more we can show that these provisions are controversial, the better chance we have of keeping them out of the second bill in the Fall. After the bill is considered on the floor, contact your Representative again. It is perfectly appropriate to express disappointment if he or she supported a bill that contained competitive bidding, or to express thanks for opposing it.

A Competitive Bidding Section appears on the home page of www.aahomecare.org from which you can obtain our position paper and talking points. You can also link to the Capitol Connection Web site at <http://capitol.medgroup.com> to identify your Members of Congress, access a sample message, and email it directly.

Although now is a critical time to call or write, we must keep up the drumbeat all summer long. Remember that your Members of Congress will be in their districts during the July 4 and August recesses. Schedule a visit, and take along colleagues and a consumer, too. If you can't schedule a meeting, ask his/her office for a schedule of town hall meetings. Go to these and raise competitive bidding. By September, we need to make certain that every Member of Congress has heard many, many times about this subject.

This will be a long battle, and the only way to win is to keep at it.