The undersigned organizations would like to thank you for introducing the Competitive Bidding Relief Act of 2023 (S. 1294).

Congress provided relief in the 2022 Omnibus bill for Durable Medical Equipment (DME) items in non-rural, non-competitive bidding areas until the end of 2023. This relief was vital to protecting Medicare beneficiaries’ access to the home medical equipment they need. S. 1294 will extend the 75/25 blended rate for DME items in non-competitive bidding areas until the end of 2024, further protecting Medicare beneficiaries’ access to care.

Costs have continued to rise throughout the last three years because of supply chain issues, increased raw material and labor costs, and inflation. The entire supply chain has been affected while demand climbs. DME manufacturers and distributors cannot absorb the significant cost increases for raw goods, production, shipping, import freights, and supply chain economics, so they are passing it on to suppliers.

These costs are being shouldered by DME suppliers who continue receiving price increase notifications from their vendor partners as well as increased delivery and operational costs, while facing fixed reimbursement rates. **Delivery costs alone have increased by 33%** on average during the pandemic, including roundtrip expenses with vehicle costs, labor, personal protective equipment, and time to set up equipment, educate beneficiaries and/or family caregivers, and pick up equipment. Many of these added cost pressures will continue and threaten the viability of DME suppliers to continue to meet the needs of our patient communities.

From seniors to individuals with disabilities or chronic conditions, people across the country rely on DME to go about their daily lives and manage their medical needs in a cost-effective home environment. However, this equipment cannot save lives if it is not available to those who need it most, especially in rural communities where we know barriers to access health care already exist.

Thank you again for you for introducing the Competitive Bidding Relief Act of 2023 (S. 1294). We look forward to working with you on the passage of this important legislation.
Sincerely,

AAHomecare -- American Association for Homecare
CQRC -- Council for Quality Respiratory Care
NCART -- National Coalition for Assistive and Rehab Technology
VGM -- The VGM Group
MAMES -- Midwest Association for Medical Equipment Services
MHHA -- Michigan HomeCare & Hospice Association
HOMES -- Home Medical Equipment & Services Association of New England
Big Sky AMES -- Big Sky Association of Home Medical Equipment Suppliers
PAMES -- Pacific Association for Medical Equipment Services
PAMS -- Pennsylvania Association of Medical Suppliers
SWMESA -- Southwest Medical Equipment Suppliers Association
ADMEA -- Alabama Durable Medical Equipment Association
ATHOMES -- Association for Tennessee Home Oxygen & Medical Equipment Services
FAHCS -- Florida Alliance of Home Care Services
ACMESA -- Atlantic Coast Medical Equipment Services Association
NEMEP -- Northeast Medical Equipment Providers Association
Great Lakes Home Medical Services Association
OAMES -- Ohio Association of Medical Equipment Services
MNCHA -- Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association
NAMPS – Nevada Association of Medical Product Suppliers
CAMPS -- California Association of Medical Product Suppliers
TexMEP -- Texas Medical Equipment Providers Association
MSAMES -- Mississippi Association of Medical Equipment Suppliers
OMEPA -- Oklahoma Medical Equipment Providers Association
CAMES -- Colorado Association for Medical Equipment Services
GAMES -- Georgia Association of Medical Equipment Suppliers