

Repeal the Ineffective DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program: Limiting Access to Important Medical Equipment Will Harm our Patients

Dear Colleague:

Please join me in repealing the Medicare durable medical equipment competitive bidding program. The best way to reduce costs in Medicare is through well thought-out policies that *work* – not a deeply flawed program that ultimately hurts the people we’re trying to help.

The Medicare competitive bid program for durable medical equipment and services (Title XVIII of the Social Security Act) began in July, 2008, as a well-intentioned effort to improve quality of service and eliminate excess costs in Medicare. However, there was nothing competitive about the misconceived program. There are serious flaws in the bidding process which produced few competitors, fewer homecare services, and a decrease in the quality of health care for seniors and those with disabilities who require the right care and equipment in order to live.

Congress delayed the program only two weeks after it began, in a clear acknowledgement that the bidding process was deeply flawed and needed fixing. For example, contracts were awarded to

- suppliers without a physical location in or near the bid area and who were unable to provide the equipment or services to patients;
- unlicensed providers (in violation state standards); and
- fly-by-night operations with no experience in providing the bid items.

However, in the 14 months since the competitive bidding program has been delayed, no significant improvements have been made to the process. In October, 2009, the program is due to begin again. We cannot allow it to restart. Medicare has created new programs to cut costs and remove unqualified and corrupt suppliers since Competitive Bidding was enacted, resulting in a total average savings to Medicare of 16.5% and reaching the cost-reduction goals the program originally set out achieve. The repeal will be paid for via modest cuts proposed by the industry.

Please join me in repealing the program so that we can prevent its ill effects and ensure that we continue to maintain access and options for our patients. Before beginning the work of crafting a program that works, we must first prevent harm from being done.

For more information or to add your name as an original cosponsor, please contact Peter Gwynn-Sackson by phone at 5-4506 or via email at peter.gwynn-sackson@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

KENDRICK B. MEEK
Member of Congress