

FAQs on Upcoming Medical Equipment Changes in Medicare



What is **COMPETITIVE BIDDING**?

Competitive bidding is a new Medicare program that will make it challenging for beneficiaries to obtain the medically necessary equipment and services they need for daily living. Medicare traditionally has contracted with many home medical equipment (HME) providers throughout the country. However, the competitive bidding program will decrease the number of providers available to supply equipment and services. Medicare will accept new providers based on a bidding process. Those providers who offer the lowest bids for equipment and service will receive contracts from Medicare.

How does competitive bidding challenge beneficiaries?

Beneficiaries spend many years building relationships with local HME providers who deliver and service equipment in a timely manner. The providers are there during power outages, malfunctions and other potentially life-threatening moments. They can also complete repairs so beneficiaries can live normally – attend work, school or family functions. Competitive bidding forces the majority of beneficiaries to find new providers, causing many challenges.

1. Major transitional issues are expected as beneficiaries attempt to find new providers.
2. For many beneficiaries, new providers are located farther away, increasing travel to obtain equipment and services.
3. Studies show that beneficiaries in rural areas are disparately affected as most “chosen” providers are located in metropolitan centers.
4. Providers “chosen” by Medicare are taking on larger caseloads. This causes long waits for equipment or service that result in immobility, emergency room visits and unnecessary hospital stays.
5. Studies show that some of the “chosen” providers are not specialized to service, nor do they carry the equipment they won bids to provide.
6. The Medicare-accepted low-bid equipment is the cheapest equipment available, which could lead to future malfunctions.
7. Beneficiaries may not have access to the equipment they prefer, and will have limited coverage for new technologies that could improve daily living.

Who are beneficiaries?

Medicare beneficiaries are seniors over the age of 65 and disabled Americans who qualify for the program.



Learn more on our website!



What medical equipment is included in the bidding process?

- Oxygen supplies and equipment
- Standard power wheelchairs, scooters and related accessories
- Mail-order replacement diabetic supplies
- Enteral nutrients, equipment and supplies
- CPAP, RADs and related supplies and accessories
- Hospital beds and related accessories
- Walkers and related accessories
- Negative pressure wound therapy pumps and related supplies
- Support surfaces

When will the competitive bidding program go into effect?

The first phase of the competitive bidding program began in 2011 in nine areas located in Ohio, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, Florida, Pennsylvania and California.

On July 1, 2013, 91 more metropolitan areas throughout the country will be added to the program. For a complete list, visit the PFQC website.

What is People for Quality Care?

People for Quality Care (PFQC) is a grass-roots organization formed to educate beneficiaries, caregivers and the public on the impact of Medicare's competitive bidding program. The implementation of competitive bidding has decreased beneficiaries' quality of life by limiting access to home medical equipment and service, timely repairs and lifesaving technologies. People for Quality Care is committed to telling the stories of individuals whose lives have been impacted by competitive bidding.

Do you want to make a difference? Here are three ways you can help:

1. **Contact PFQC** for free educational materials to hand out to family, friends and co-workers. Call us at **800-260-7913**.
2. **Contact your representative and senators.** Ask them to repeal the Medicare Competitive Bidding Program for durable medical equipment and consider the Market Pricing Program as an alternative solution to cost savings.

Call the Congressional Switchboard toll free at **1-202-224-3121**, or email your legislators from our website, **www.peopleforqualitycare.org**. Start by entering your ZIP code at the bottom of the page, next to the green arrow.

3. **Tell us your story.** Tell us how you have been impacted by the Medicare competitive bidding program. Or tell us why timely service and quality equipment are important to access and independence. Do this on our homepage.

Learn more on our website!

