

2018 – DME Policy Concerns

Strengthening Patient Centered Healthcare through DME State Licensure

The Vital Role of DME within the Healthcare System

Most DME are high service items, meaning that it requires health care professionals to travel to a patients home, setup the equipment and educate the patient for the items to be properly used. Whether it be a hospital bed in the home and the knowledge to prevent pressure ulcers, a properly fitted CPAP mask, or a custom wheelchair to meet the individual needs of a disabled individual. These items, in order to get the best return on investment for the government, require hands on care in order to prevent readmissions to the hospitals and additional complications which will inevitably result in higher costs to the healthcare system.

Many out-of-state suppliers are attempting to ship in DME items that require a health professional to teach the patient how to use the items, or require the capability of getting the product to the home quickly. For example, a patient needs to be discharged from the hospital and needs a supply of oxygen prior to leaving the hospital. Being dependent on companies that to dropship oxygen concentrators from another corner of the country puts the patient in a likely situation of being required to stay in the hospital, resulting in a much higher cost to the taxpayers.

Key areas within licensure language:

This foundation is crucial to the protection of access for patients, especially in rural areas, to the vital equipment they need. A DME licensure bill helps ensure that patients will be served through a minimum set of requirements. A reciprocal agreement may then be established between governing authorities to ensure continuity of care across state lines where patients may choose to access their care.

A state licensure language would require all DME providers within a given state to meet all of the following requirements:

- **Point of Service Requirement:** Providers outside of a licensed state must be within a specific distance to the patient. This addresses Commerce Clause issues for contiguous states maintaining competition.
- **Accreditation:** Suppliers must obtain accreditation by an accreditation body, just as Medicare requires.
- **DME Policy Involvement:** Establish a role for the DME industry to have a seat on state boards and commissions to have a voice in healthcare policy at the state level.
- **Reciprocal Agreement:** It is advantageous for licensure language to be partnered with a reciprocal agreement from adjoining states.