

Dear Congressman

The Ohio Society for Respiratory Care for Respiratory Care (OSRC), a 2,300 member professional association for respiratory therapists, asks for your support/sponsorship of H.R. 1041, legislation that seeks to repeal the Medicare competitive bidding program for durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) in a budget neutral manner.

Competitive bidding, if implemented, would:

- >Eliminate thousands of jobs (estimated at 80,000 – 100,000) and hundreds of DME companies;**
- >Be anti-competitive eliminating qualified providers (90.8% would have been eliminated in Rd 1);**
- >Delay hospital discharges and trigger unnecessary emergency room visits;**
- > Award contracts to providers that had no previous/local experience, like Rd 1;**
- >Force bidders to submit artificially low bids in desperation of losing their business/employees;**
- >Ignore the fact that the home medical/DME sector is the slowest growing portion of Medicare;**
- >Greatly reduce the capacity to provide care when there is a rapid growth in an older population.**

Respiratory therapists provide clinical care and services to pulmonary patients across the continuum of care. While the majority of respiratory therapists work in the hospital setting, an increasing number are employed in alternative care sites such as nursing homes, physician offices, rehabilitation facilities and home care companies.

The OSRC and our members are very much aware of the struggles many of our pulmonary home care patients are having in receiving the full range of Medicare services for which they are eligible and which they desperately need. Constant changes in Medicare coverage policy for durable medical equipment, such as the 36 month cap on oxygen rental and the impending implementation of the competitive bid program have had a negative impact on the pulmonary patient's ambulatory care.

HR 1041 will repeal the extremely flawed competitive bid program and include provisions that will assure the budget neutrality through other payment reductions.

The OSRC believes this legislation is good for the patient, a sound Medicare policy and is fiscally responsible and we urge your support/sponsorship of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,