



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR RESPIRATORY CARE
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June 2, 2017

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Re: Request to Sign-On to Congressional Letter to CMS on Patient Access to Durable Medical Equipment and Related Services

Dear Members of Congress:

The American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) strongly urges you to support patient access to durable medical equipment (DME) and other related services by signing on to the attached Congressional letter to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The AARC is a national professional organization with a membership of over 47,000 respiratory therapists who treat patients with chronic respiratory diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and whose organizational activities impact over 170,000 practicing respiratory therapists across the country.

The letter urges CMS to use its authority to make important, needed reforms to current DME policies and regulations. The AARC 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. Medicare beneficiaries with COPD including emphysema and chronic bronchitis, as well as those diagnosed with other pulmonary diseases, require a diverse array of respiratory equipment and frequently rely on the uninterrupted use of such equipment in order to live or, at the very least, maintain their expected quality of life.

As the Congressional sign-on letter details, CMS' decisions involving the competitive bidding program, non-competitive bid areas (CBAs), complex rehabilitative technology (CRT) accessories, and oxygen concentrators have resulted in deep cuts that ultimately harm beneficiary access to care. The Administration has the authority to rectify the procedural and substantive issues in DME policy in each of these areas, and the letter calls for CMS to take action to provide needed relief for providers and suppliers of DME and the beneficiaries who depend on these services and devices.

The AARC urges you to join your colleagues in supporting needed changes to improve Medicare beneficiary access to care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian K. Walsh".

Brian K. Walsh, PhD, RRT-NPS, RRT-ACCS, AE-C, RPFT, FAARC
President