

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



News Flash –

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- [“Basic Medicare Information for Providers and Suppliers,”](#) Guide, ICN 005933, Downloadable only.

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Medicare DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program: Quick Reference Article

Provider Types Affected

This MLN Matters® Special Edition Article is informational in nature. It is intended to be a quick reference tool for all health care professionals who order or refer patients for Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) in a Competitive Bidding Area (CBA).

Background

The Round 1 Rebid of the Medicare DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program (The Program) was successfully implemented in nine areas on January 1, 2011. Round 2 of The Program is targeted to go into effect in 91 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) on July 1, 2013. Medicare will also be

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implementing a national mail-order program for diabetic testing supplies at the same time as Round 2. The national mail-order program will include all parts of the United States, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.

When a round of The Program becomes effective, beneficiaries with Original Medicare who obtain competitively bid items in CBAs must obtain these items from a contract supplier for Medicare to pay, unless an exception applies. Referral agents located in CBAs who prescribe DMEPOS for Medicare beneficiaries or refer beneficiaries to specific suppliers should be aware of which suppliers in the area are contract suppliers. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) plans to announce the contract suppliers for Round 2 and the national mail order program in the spring of 2013.

About This Article

This article is designed as a quick reference tool that provides referral agents with a list of important web links and phone numbers to find information on The Program. The information found at these sources will greatly assist referral agents in locating information that will assist them in obtaining DMEPOS items and services for Medicare beneficiaries. For purposes of The Program, referral agents include such entities as Medicare enrolled providers, physicians, treating practitioners, discharge planners, social workers, disability/disease-based organizations, and pharmacists who refer beneficiaries for services in a CBA.

Referral agents play a critical role in helping beneficiaries select DMEPOS suppliers that can meet the beneficiaries' needs and meet the requirements of the program. A beneficiary's first contact with The Program may be at the point when he or she receives a prescription for a competitively bid item. If the beneficiary resides in a CBA or is visiting a CBA in which he or she needs to obtain a competitively bid item, he or she may need to be directed to a contract supplier.

Where Do I Go to Learn More About the Medicare DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program?

The CMS webpage on The Program (<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/DMEPOSCompetitiveBid/index.html>) provides links to the latest news, press releases, announcements and fact sheets. A link to the Round 2/National Mail Order timeline can also be found on this webpage.

Partnering with CMS is a key to helping people with Medicare maximize their benefits. Beyond extending the reach of these important benefits to people who need them, a partnership helps you leverage resources by fostering relationships with other CMS partners, keeps you informed, and provides you with expert training, educational materials, tools such as this toolkit at http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Outreach/Partnerships/DMEPOS_Toolkit.html, research, and a connection to CMS' 10 regional offices, where you may access personalized local assistance.

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E-Mail Updates for Referral Agents

In the coming months leading up to the start of The Program, CMS will send out more information that will be helpful for referral agents and guide them through the changes that the new program brings.

In light of the important role that referral agents serve, CMS has adopted the use of a new email update to better communicate the various aspects of The Program and to ensure that official information is released and received by referral agents as quickly as possible. CMS encourages all referral agents to sign up for this new email update to ensure they receive the most accurate and timely information regarding The Program.

To ensure you give Medicare patients correct DMEPOS information, sign up for the [email updates for referral agents](#).

How Do I Know If a Medicare Beneficiary Resides in a Competitive Bidding Area?

The Competitive Bidding Implementation Contactor (CBIC) provides a tool at <http://www.dmecompetitivebid.com> to find a CBA on its website. To determine if a beneficiary resides in a CBA, click on the "Find a CBA" tab and enter the ZIP CODE of the beneficiary's permanent residence on file with the Social Security Administration (SSA).

The tool will indicate whether the ZIP CODE is within a CBA or not.

How Do I Find a Medicare Contract Supplier for a Medicare Beneficiary in a CBA?

The Medicare.gov website (<http://www.medicare.gov/default.aspx>) provides a Supplier Directory tool under the "Resource Locator" tab for finding a Medicare contract supplier to provide certain durable medical equipment in the Medicare DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program where the beneficiary resides. Once the contract suppliers have been announced, the Supplier Directory tool will indicate whether the beneficiary is affected by the Medicare Competitive Bidding program based on the beneficiary's ZIP CODE and the particular DMEPOS needed.

Customer service representatives at **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)** can also assist beneficiaries in finding a contract supplier. TTY users should call **1-877-486-2048**.

How Do I Know What DMEPOS Items and Services Are Competitively Bid Items in the Program?

Product categories are groupings of related items that are used to treat a similar medical condition. A list of the product categories for Round 2 can be found by visiting

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http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/DMEPOSCompetitiveBid/Product_Categories_and_Items.html on the CMS website.

The CBIC provides a tool to identify specific items within a product category by Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) code at

<http://www.dmecompetitivebid.com/palmetto/cbicrd2.nsf/DocsCat/Product%20Categories> on its website.

News Flash - Diabetes and the Seasonal Flu - November is National Diabetes Awareness Month. Diabetes can weaken the immune system, which can put seniors and others with diabetes at greater risk for flu-related complications like pneumonia. Medicare provides coverage for one seasonal influenza virus vaccine per influenza season for all Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare generally provides coverage of the pneumococcal vaccination and its administration once in a lifetime for all Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare may provide coverage of additional pneumococcal vaccinations based on risk or uncertainty of beneficiary pneumococcal vaccination status. Medicare provides coverage for the seasonal flu and pneumococcal vaccines and their administration for seniors and others with Medicare with no co-pay or deductible. And remember, seasonal flu vaccine is particularly important for health care workers, who may spread the flu to their patients. Don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff. Protect your patients. Protect your family. Protect yourself. *Know what to do about the flu.*

Remember – The influenza vaccine plus its administration and the pneumococcal vaccine plus its administration are covered Part B benefits. The influenza vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine are NOT Part D-covered drugs. CMS has posted the 2012-2013 [Seasonal Influenza Vaccines Pricing](#) on the CMS website. You may also refer to the [MLN Matters® Article #MM8047](#), "Influenza Vaccine Payment Allowances - Annual Update for 2012-2013 Season."

For more information on coverage and billing of the flu vaccine and its administration, please visit the [CMS Medicare Learning Network® Preventive Services Educational Products](#) and [CMS Immunizations](#) web pages. And, while some providers may offer the flu vaccine, others can help their patients locate a vaccine provider within their local community. [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#) is a free, online service where users can search for locations offering flu vaccines.

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