



Medicare Changes for Certain Medical Equipment and Supplies

Starting January 1, 2014

If you have Original Medicare and use certain equipment or supplies, you may be affected by upcoming changes. In 2011, Medicare began a competitive bidding program for certain medical equipment and supplies in nine areas including Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC; Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN; Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH; Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX; Kansas City, MO-KS; Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL; Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA. The program means big savings for people with Medicare—an average of 37 percent—while ensuring access to quality equipment.

Under the competitive bidding program, you generally need to use a contract supplier for Medicare to help pay for your item. The supplier contracts that started on January 1, 2011 expire at the end of 2013. January 1, 2014 marks the start of a new contract period for the competitive bidding program in these nine areas, and that means some of the contract suppliers and prices are changing. Contract suppliers have been carefully vetted, so you'll have access to quality items from suppliers you can trust. You will continue to see substantial savings on equipment like oxygen, wheelchairs, and hospital beds as compared to the outdated, excessive fee schedule. Some new product categories have been added since 2011, which means more people can benefit from the savings.

If you're already renting certain medical equipment or receiving oxygen or oxygen equipment from a supplier that won't be a contract supplier, you may be able to stay with that supplier after January 1. Suppliers that don't have a new Medicare contract can choose to become "grandfathered" suppliers and continue to rent your equipment to you.

Here are some items included in the program:

- Respiratory Equipment and Related Supplies and Accessories
 - includes oxygen, oxygen equipment, and supplies; continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) devices and respiratory assist devices (RADs) and related supplies and accessories; and standard nebulizers
- Standard Mobility Equipment and Related Accessories
 - includes walkers, standard power and manual wheelchairs, scooters, and related accessories
- General Home Equipment and Related Supplies and Accessories
 - includes hospital beds and related accessories, group 1 and 2 support surfaces, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) devices, commode chairs, patient lifts, and seat lifts
- Enteral Nutrients, Equipment and Supplies
- Negative Pressure Wound Therapy Pumps and Related Supplies and Accessories
- External Infusion Pumps and Supplies

Your existing supplier may still be a contract supplier, but it's best to make sure. Here are some simple steps you should take if you use any of the equipment listed above:

1. Visit Medicare.gov/supplier or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) (TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048) and check the list of suppliers that have contracts in your area starting on January 1, 2014 to see if your current supplier is on the list. If so, you don't need to do anything else.
2. If you **rent** certain medical equipment or are receiving oxygen or oxygen equipment, check with your supplier to find out if they plan to become a grandfathered supplier. If your supplier chooses to become a grandfathered supplier, they will let you know in writing at least 30 business days prior to January 1. You may choose to keep using them or switch to a contract supplier. If they choose **not** to become a grandfathered supplier, see Step 3 below.
3. Check the list of contract suppliers for your area (see Step 1 above) and contact them as soon as possible to ensure continued access to your medical items and Medicare payment for the items.

Make sure to let your friends and loved ones know about these changes as well!

If you have questions or want more information, Medicare has resources to help you, including Medicare.gov/supplier and 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You can also call your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for free health insurance counseling and personalized help. If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), your plan will notify you if your supplier is changing. Contact your plan for more information.

This information is provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

