Medicare's DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program

Supplier Quality Standards and Beneficiary Protections

Medicare's Competitive Bidding Program for durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics and supplies (DMEPOS) will reduce out-of-pocket expenses for Medicare beneficiaries and save the Medicare program money while ensuring beneficiaries continue to receive quality products from accredited suppliers.

All Medicare DMEPOS suppliers are required to be accredited and meet quality standards. The quality standards include key beneficiary protections and safeguards related to respiratory equipment, power mobility devices (PMDs), and other durable medical equipment (DME). All of these important protections and safeguards will continue to be enforced by independent Accreditation Organizations under the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program.

MEDICARE QUALITY STANDARDS AND BENEFICIARY PROTECTIONS

Beneficiary Assurances

All Medicare billed DME has beneficiary protections such as:

- The equipment that the beneficiary uses meets all manufacturer standards and is provided by trained professionals in the manner that is 1) nationally recognized for safe and effective patient care and that 2) meets the beneficiary's needs and therapeutic goals;
- The beneficiary receives information about the correct use of the equipment to minimize any hazard or safety risks;
- All personnel who are educating the beneficiary, or repairing his/her equipment, are working within the scope of their practice and their state requirements;
- Whenever the beneficiary needs assistance, someone with the right professional knowledge will be able to answer all of the beneficiary's questions or come out to the beneficiary's home, if necessary, to provide additional equipment or troubleshoot an issue with the existing equipment; and
- If there is an incident with the beneficiary's equipment, the supplier will be responsive in determining what caused the problem, in removing the problem and in assuring the beneficiary that the risk of the same issue occurring has been minimized.

In order to provide these beneficiary assurances, **all suppliers that provide any DME to Medicare beneficiaries must:**

- Provide only items that meet applicable Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and medical device effectiveness and safety standards, and provide manufacturer copies of the features, warranties, and instructions for each type of non-custom fabricated item to the beneficiary;
- Have equipment delivery, set-up, and beneficiary education accomplished by competent technical and professional personnel who are licensed, certified, or registered, and who are functioning within their scope of practice as required by their State standards;
- Make repair and maintenance available on all equipment and item(s) provided;
- Provide regular business hour and after-hour access telephone number(s) for customer service, and for information about equipment repair and emergency coverage;

- Implement a program that promotes the safe use of equipment, and minimizes safety risks, infections and hazards; and
- Investigate any incident, injury, or infection in which DMEPOS may have been a contributor, when they become aware.

Beneficiary Safeguards

Medicare beneficiaries who use DME are assured that:

- They are made knowledgeable about the safe use and maintenance of their equipment;
- By complying with appropriate maintenance standards for equipment, the beneficiary will not acquire an equipment related complication (for example, by maintaining respiratory equipment according to OSHA standards, the beneficiary will not develop a secondary infection from such equipment);
- The equipment can be used wherever the beneficiary lives (at home or in various care facilities, such as an assisted care facility or a nursing home); and
- The beneficiary's needs are consistently reevaluated by both the prescribing physician and the supplier to make certain that the equipment is being used appropriately and is meeting the intended therapeutic goals.

In order to provide these beneficiary safeguards, **all suppliers that provide any DME to Medicare beneficiaries must**:

- Provide the appropriate information about equipment set-up features, routine use, troubleshooting, cleaning and maintenance;
- Provide education and any instructional material that is tailored to the beneficiary's particular needs, abilities, learning preferences and language;
- Provide relevant information about infection control issues related to the use of all equipment and item(s) provided;
- Ensure that the beneficiary can use all equipment and item(s) provided safely and effectively in the settings of anticipated use; and
- Provide follow-up services to the beneficiary, consistent with the types of equipment provided, and recommendations from the prescribing physician.

BENEFICIARY SAFEGUARDS FOR RESPIRATORY EQUIPMENT

Medicare beneficiaries who use respiratory equipment are assured that:

- When the beneficiary needs assistance, someone with professional knowledge will be able to come out to his/her home, if necessary, to provide additional equipment or troubleshoot an issue with the existing equipment;
- All equipment is provided by trained professionals in the clinical manner that is nationally recognized for safe and effective patient care; and
- The beneficiary receives, in accordance with the *American Association for Respiratory Care Practice Guidelines*, the proper education on the safe and effective use of their equipment and treatment modality.

NOTE: Such standards ensure beneficiaries have the information they need to be an active participant in their care.

In order to provide these beneficiary safeguards, **all suppliers that provide any respiratory equipment to Medicare beneficiaries must**:

- Provide respiratory services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as required;
- Comply with the current version of the *American Association for Respiratory Care Practice Guidelines for Oxygen Therapy in the Home or Extended Care Facility; Long Term Invasive Mechanical Ventilation in the Home; and Intermittent Positive Pressure Breathing (IPPB)*; and

- Provide training to the beneficiary consistent with the current version of the *American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) Practice Guidelines.*

NOTE: AARC guidelines can be found at http://www.rcjournal.com/cpgs/index.cfm on the Internet.

BENEFICIARY SAFEGUARDS FOR ANY POWER MOBILITY DEVICES (PMDs)

PMDs include power wheelchairs and power operated vehicles (POVs) and accessories. Complex Rehabilitative Wheelchairs are: 1) Group 2 power wheelchairs with power options; and 2) Group 3 and higher power and manual wheelchairs that can accommodate rehabilitative accessories and features, for example, tilt in space. (Note: Group 2 power wheelchairs with power options are the only complex rehabilitative wheelchairs included in the Round 1 Rebid of the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program. No complex rehabilitative power wheelchairs are included in Round 2 or the Round 1 Recompete.)

Medicare beneficiaries who use Manual wheelchairs, PMDs, and complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and assistive technology are assured that they receive the wheelchair that best meets their needs based on a complete physical and environmental assessment.

All suppliers that provide any Manual Wheelchairs, Power Mobility Devices (PMDs), and Complex Rehabilitative Wheelchairs and Assistive Technology must verify that seating, positioning and specialty assistive technology have been evaluated.

BENEFICIARY SAFEGUARDS FOR ANY COMPLEX REHABILITATIVE WHEELCHAIRS AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Medicare beneficiaries who use complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and assistive technology are assured that:

- Anyone evaluating the beneficiary has the training and experience to handle all of the technology and understands his/her very complex needs;
- The beneficiary's privacy will be maintained, and that he/she will be treated with respect;
- The equipment the beneficiary receives can always be repaired, modified, and maintained (one of the most important aspects of providing safe and therapeutic complex rehabilitation);
- Everyone associated with the equipment is always actively participating in assessing the equipment, and with providing the optimal care and equipment that the beneficiary requires;
- The equipment will be reliable and will work for the beneficiary without worry; and
- Beneficiaries receive the equipment at their convenience, in a prompt manner and according to both the prescribing physician's recommendations and the beneficiary's assessed needs.

All suppliers that provide any Complex Rehabilitative Wheelchairs and Assistive Technology must:

- At each of their locations, employ (as a W-2 employee) at least one qualified individual as a Rehabilitative Technology Supplier (RTS), who is either a Certified Rehabilitative Technology Supplier (CRTS) or an Assistive Technology Professional (ATP).
- Have at least one or more *trained technicians* available to service each location, who meets the following criteria:
  - ✓ Factory trained by manufacturers of the products supplied by the company;
  - ✓ Experienced in the field of Rehabilitative Technology, (e.g., on the job training, familiarity with rehabilitative clients, products and services);

- ✓ Completed at least 10 hours annually of continuing education specific to Rehabilitative Technology; and
- ✓ Able to program and repair sophisticated electronics associated with power wheelchairs, alternative drive controls, and power seating systems.

- Provide the beneficiary private, clean, and safe rooms appropriate for fittings and evaluations;
- Maintain a repair shop located in the facility (or in close proximity, or easily accessible from another of the supplier's locations), as well as an area appropriate for product assembly and modification;
- Ensure that the RTS coordinates services with the prescribing physician to conduct face-to-face evaluations of the beneficiary in an appropriate setting, and include input from other members of the health care team (i.e., Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, etc.);
- Provide the beneficiary with appropriate equipment for trial and simulation, when necessary.
- Implement procedures for assembly and set-up of equipment as well as a process to verify that the final product meets the specifications of the original product recommendation approved by the prescribing physician.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Medicare's DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program, visit http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Partnerships/03_DMEPOS_Toolkit.asp#TopOfPage.

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