



DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program: Traveling Patients

All DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program (CBP) Round 2021 Contracts for off-the-shelf (OTS) back braces and for OTS knee braces expired on December 31, 2023. As of January 1, 2024, there's a temporary gap period for the DMEPOS CBP. Visit [DMEPOS Competitive Bidding](#) for more information.



Under the Medicare DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program (CBP), patients with Original Medicare who get competitively bid items in designated competitive bidding areas (CBAs) must get them from a competitive bidding contract supplier, unless an exception applies.

This includes patients who don't permanently live in a CBA but need competitively bid items while traveling to and within a CBA.

Know these CBP rules for patients who need an OTS back or knee brace while traveling:

- We base payment on the patient's permanent residence
- The CBA where the patient buys the OTS back or knee brace determines which supplier may provide it
- The supplier who provides the OTS back or knee brace to the Medicare patient must accept assignment (in other words, accept Medicare payment as payment in full) **unless** the patient's permanent residence isn't in a CBA and they travel to an area that isn't a CBA.

The CBP was in effect only for off-the-shelf (OTS) back and knee braces from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023.

For CBP exceptions, refer to [42 CFR 414.408\(e\)\(2\)](#).

The permanent residence is the address on file with the Social Security Administration (SSA). It's the address SSA uses to mail any correspondence.

CBAs are defined by ZIP Codes. Find CBA supplier information at [DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program](#).

To get paid for **OTS back braces**, use HCPCS code: **L0450, L0455, L0457, L0467, L0469, L0621, L0623, L0625, L0628, L0641, L0642, L0643, L0648, L0649, L0650, or L0651.**

To get paid for **OTS knee braces**, use HCPCS code: **L1812, L1830, L1833, L1836, L1850, L1851, or L1852.**

Traveling Patient Policy

If a patient travels to...	Medicare will pay for competitively bid items provided by...
An area included in the CBP (a CBA)	A contract supplier for that area unless an exception applies
An area not included in the CBP	Any Medicare-approved supplier

Suppliers must add modifier **KT** to claims for OTS back or knee braces provided to patients who permanently live in a CBA and need a competitively bid item when they travel outside the CBA where they live.

Note: Suppliers who aren't contracted with Medicare to provide OTS back or knee braces for the CBA and inappropriately use the **KT** modifier on a claim for a competitively bid item may be subject to penalties under the [False Claims Act](#).

Examples

Patient Permanently Lives Within a CBA

Scenario 1: Traveling to another CBA

- The patient's permanent residence is in a CBA
- The patient travels to another CBA
- The patient must get the OTS back or knee brace from a contract supplier within the other CBA

Example – Nell permanently lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, which is in a CBA. She travels to Phoenix, Arizona, another CBA. Nell sees a physician in Phoenix about recent back pain, and the physician prescribes an OTS back brace that she begins using while temporarily living in Phoenix. Nell must get the brace from a contract supplier in Phoenix, and the supplier must add modifier **KT** to the claim.

We pay the contract supplier the single payment amount (SPA) for the brace as priced in the Charlotte CBA where Nell permanently lives. The contract supplier must accept assignment of the claim for the brace.

Scenario 2: Traveling to an area that's not a CBA

- The patient's permanent residence is in a CBA
- The patient travels to an area that isn't in a CBA
- The patient needs an OTS back or knee brace while visiting that non-CBA
- The patient may get the OTS back or knee brace from any Medicare-enrolled supplier who's accredited under Medicare to provide OTS braces or orthotics

Example – Nell permanently lives in Charlotte, which is in a CBA, and travels to Nome, Alaska, which isn't in a CBA. While in Nome, Nell sees a physician about trouble walking due to a recent injury, and the physician prescribes an OTS knee brace that she begins using while temporarily living in Nome. She may get the brace from any Medicare-enrolled supplier in Nome who's accredited under Medicare to provide OTS braces or orthotics, and the supplier must add modifier **KT** to the claim.

We pay the supplier in Nome the SPA for the brace as priced in the CBA of Charlotte where Nell permanently lives. The supplier must accept assignment of the claim for the brace.

Patient Permanently Lives Outside a CBA

Scenario 1: Traveling to a CBA

- The patient's permanent residence isn't in a CBA
- The patient travels to a CBA
- The patient needs an OTS back or knee brace while visiting that CBA
- The patient must get the OTS back or knee brace from a contract supplier within the CBA where they're visiting

Example – John lives in Butte, Montana, which isn't in a CBA. He travels to Las Vegas, Nevada, which is in a CBA. John sees a physician in Las Vegas about recent back pain, and the physician prescribes an OTS back brace that he begins using while he's temporarily living in the Las Vegas CBA. He must get the brace from a contract supplier in Las Vegas.

We pay the contract supplier in Las Vegas the fee schedule amount for Butte, where John permanently lives. The contract supplier must accept assignment of the claim for the brace.

Scenario 2: Not Traveling to a CBA

- The patient's permanent residence isn't in a CBA
- The patient travels to an area that isn't in a CBA
- The patient needs an OTS back or knee brace while visiting the area
- The patient may get the brace from any Medicare-enrolled supplier who's accredited under Medicare to provide OTS braces or orthotics

Example – Bill is from Bismarck, North Dakota, which isn't in a CBA. He travels to Pierre, South Dakota, which also isn't in a CBA. He sees a physician in Pierre about recent back pain, and the physician prescribes an OTS back brace that he begins using while he's temporarily living in Pierre. He may get the brace from any Medicare-enrolled supplier in Pierre who's accredited under Medicare to provide OTS braces or orthotics.

We pay the supplier in Pierre the fee schedule amount for the state where Bill permanently lives.

Patient Permanently Lives in a CBA and Doesn't Travel Outside the CBA

- The patient's permanent residence is in a CBA.
- The patient needs an OTS back or knee brace.
- The patient must get the OTS back or knee brace from a supplier who's contracted to provide OTS back or knee braces in the CBA, unless the patient gets the brace from a supplier under an exception. Find information about these exceptions at:
 - [Hospitals That Aren't Contract Suppliers](#)
 - [Physicians and Other Treating Practitioners, Physical Therapists & Occupational Therapists](#)

Example – Dana permanently lives in Charlotte, which is in a CBA, and her physician prescribes an OTS back or knee brace. She drives to a supplier in a county that's next to the Charlotte CBA (but isn't included in the Charlotte CBA) to get the brace. Dana isn't traveling outside the CBA in this example because she's picking up the brace and taking it back home to use it in the CBA where she lives. Under this scenario, the supplier must be a contract supplier for the Charlotte CBA or qualify for an exception described in the fact sheets linked above.

In any scenario where a patient who lives in a CBA and doesn't need an OTS back or knee brace for use in an area where they are temporarily living outside the CBA, the patient must get the brace from a contract supplier or under an exception.

Resources

- [Competitive Bidding Implementation Contractor](#)
- [DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program](#)

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