

## **Seniors in Florida Report Problems Obtaining Needed Home Medical Equipment and Services Under Controversial Medicare Bidding System**

Bio-Medicine.Org

ORLANDO, Fla., Feb. 25, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Medicare beneficiaries are reporting problems receiving required home medical equipment and services in the wake of the January 1, 2011 implementation of Medicare's controversial "competitive" bidding program in Miami and Orlando, according to the American Association for Homecare. The program will affect many of the more than one million seniors and people living with disabilities in Miami and Orlando who are enrolled in Medicare.

The bidding program is scheduled to start up in an additional 91 regions later this year, including 7 metropolitan statistical areas of Florida where another 1.3 million Medicare beneficiaries live: the Daytona Beach, Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Lakeland, Melbourne, Sarasota, and Tampa-St. Petersburg metropolitan statistical areas.

The program applies to oxygen therapy, enteral nutrients (tube feeding), continuous positive air pressure (CPAP) and respiratory assistive devices, power wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds and support surfaces, and mail-order diabetic supplies.

By design, this new Medicare program will severely restrict the number of companies that are allowed to provide the equipment and services subject to bidding, which hurts both patients and providers. Since January 1, patients, clinicians, and homecare providers have already reported:

- Difficulty finding a local equipment or service provider;
- Delays in obtaining medically required equipment and services;
- Longer than necessary hospital stays due to confusion in discharging patients to home-based care;
- Far fewer choices for patients when selecting equipment or providers;
- Reduced quality; and
- Confusing or incorrect information provided by Medicare.

"Competitive bidding is an utter disaster yet Medicare says there are no reported problems," said Sean Schwinghammer, executive director of Florida All  
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### Links:

[1] <http://www.bio-medicine.org/medicine-technology-1/Seniors-in-Florida-Report-Problems-Obtaining-Needed-Home-Medical-Equipment-and-Services-Under-Controversial-Medicare-Bidding-System-15010-1/>