Myths and Realities About Medicare's Competitive Bidding Program for Home Medical Equipment and Services

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 19, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- As Medicare expands a controversial "competitive" bidding program for home medical equipment and services, economists, consumer groups, and members of Congress have gone on record to oppose that program citing reduced patient access to care, flaws in the program design, and impact on local jobs.

"There's a reason why more than 30 patient advocacy groups [1], 244 economists and auction experts [2], and 145 members of Congress [3] oppose this program: it undermines quality of care and it increases costs," said Tyler J. Wilson, president of the American Association for Homecare. "Because of this bidding program, beneficiaries will spend more time in expensive institutions, rather than in the far more cost-effective setting for care – their own homes."

New restrictions and unsustainable prices based on this controversial bidding system [4] took effect on January 1, 2011, in nine of the largest metropolitan areas including Charlotte, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Kansas City, Miami, Orlando, Pittsburgh, and Riverside, Calif. Another 91 areas [5] throughout the U.S. will be subjected to the bidding program starting later in 2011. The bidding system affects providers and users of home medical equipment and services such as oxygen therapy, respiratory devices, hospital beds, wheelchairs, and other medically required equipment and supplies needed by seniors and people with disabilities in the Medicare system.

Proponents of
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Links:
[1] http://www.aahomecare.org/associations/3208/files/Organizations Supporting HR 1041.pdf
[2] http://www.cramton.umd.edu/papers2010-2014/further-comments-of-concerned-auction-experts-on-medicare-bidding.pdf

[3] http://www.aahomecare.org/associations/3208/files/HR1041cosponsors.pdf
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