

Dear PMC Members:

On Tuesday, January 30, 2007, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) hosted an Open Door Forum (ODF) on Home Health, Hospice and Durable Medical Equipment (DME). Winnie Pizzano and Natalie Johnson Highsmith of CMS' Office of External Affairs moderated the forum.

The following were items discussed that are of interest to power mobility device (PMD) suppliers:

Competitive Bidding and Accreditation

CMS rescinded Transmittal 188, issued on January 26, 2007, which was made public in error. The transmittal stated that all durable medical equipment (DME) suppliers need to be accredited by April 1, 2007. While CMS did state that all DME suppliers need to be accredited to receive a Medicare supplier number (regardless of whether they plan to participate in competitive bidding), no mandated deadline has yet to be established.

CMS did, however, express disappointment that suppliers are not getting accredited by one of the ten nationally recognized accreditation bodies named last month (eleven organizations were originally named and two have since merged). CMS characterized this as “alarming” and urged suppliers not to wait and that they are taking a “business risk” in deferring accreditation. CMS noted that information on the products and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) most likely subject to competitive bidding were in the proposed rule and that suppliers in those areas should be starting the accreditation process. CMS officials did reiterate that suppliers will not have to be accredited to participate in the initial competitive bidding rounds, but it is CMS’ “goal” to have winning bidders accredited prior to signing a supplier contract.

When asked when the final rule on competitive bidding was to be released, no specific timeframe was mentioned other than CMS “was working hard to finalize” the rule. Further, CMS ruled out releasing a list of products or MSAs subject to competitive bidding prior to release of the final rule since the rule sets out the methodology of how the products and areas are determined.

National Provider Identifier (NPI)

CMS urged supplier to apply for their NPI and that suppliers with their NPI should start implementation in their current business practices. More information on the NPI can be found at: npes.cms.hhs.gov.

Contractor Survey

In the first week of January, CMS sent out its 2007 Contractor Satisfaction Survey to 3500 Medicare providers. CMS urges all providers chosen to take the time

(approximately 15 minutes) and fill out the survey by the end of February. Providers can respond online, by fax or telephone

The next ODF for Home Health, Hospice and DME is scheduled for March 14th. As always, the PMC will forward you the details on how to participate when they become available, as well as provide any further information on the topics discussed above.