



April 30, 2012

The Honorable
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: **Co-Sponsor HR 4378:**
Ensuring Access to Quality Complex Rehabilitation Technology Act of 2012

Dear Representatives:

The Independence through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition requests your support of HR 4378, the *Ensuring Access to Quality Complex Rehabilitation Technology Act of 2012*. HR 4378 will establish a separate benefit category for complex rehabilitation technology within Medicare and ensure beneficiary access to critical assistive devices for beneficiaries with disabling conditions. The ITEM Coalition is a group of national disability organizations working to advance access to assistive devices and technologies for people with disabilities and chronic conditions.

Individuals with disabilities need access to Complex Rehabilitation Technologies (CRT) to achieve high levels of function and good health outcomes and participate independently in their community. CRT is prescribed and customized to meet the specific medical and functional needs of individuals with disabilities and medical conditions such as, but not limited to, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal Cord Injury, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease), and Spina Bifida.

However, because CRT is currently coupled with the more general Durable Medical Equipment benefit, these patients face a series of challenges trying to access the appropriate and necessary technologies and services. HR 4378 addresses those challenges by:

- Ensuring access to appropriate products and technology based on a person's functional needs, rather than diagnosis;
- Allowing individuals to access devices that can be used outside of the home and in the community, allowing individuals to work and participate in community life; and
- Ensuring access to local CRT suppliers equipped to make repairs and maintenance for specialized devices.

Congress recognized the difference between DME and CRT when it exempted complex rehabilitation wheelchairs from DME competitive bidding in the Medicare Improvements for

Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA). CRT was exempted from this program to preserve access to these specialized technologies for a patient population that is vulnerable and at-risk. The ITEM Coalition urges you to support the *Ensuring Access to Quality Complex Rehabilitation Technology Act of 2012* that recognizes the customized nature of the technology and the range of services necessary to meet the unique medical and functional needs of people with disabilities and complex medical conditions. For more information, please contact Peter Thomas, ITEM Coalition Counsel, at Peter.Thomas@ppsv.com or (202) 466-6550.

Sincerely,