



September 24, 2015

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for the Patient Access to Disposable Medical Technology Act of 2015

Dear Chairman Upton:

On behalf of the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition, we write to thank you for your support of the *Patient Access to Disposable Medical Technology Act of 2015* (H.R. 1018). We appreciate your leadership in ensuring the disposable medical technology provision was included in the 21st Century Cures Act (H.R. 6). This vital provision will increase patient access to innovative and cost-effective technology in the home care setting, which is important to our members. We look forward to working with you to see this this legislation enacted into law.

ITEM Coalition is a national consumer and clinician-led coalition advocating for access to and coverage of assistive devices and technologies for persons with injuries, illnesses, disabilities and chronic conditions of all ages. Our members represent individuals with a wide range of disabling conditions, as well as the providers who serve them, including such conditions as multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, visual impairments, hearing and speech impairments, limb loss, brain injury, stroke, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, myositis, osteogenesis imperfecta, and other life-altering conditions.

As medicine advances and innovation occurs in the treatment of injuries, illnesses, disabilities, and chronic conditions, Medicare beneficiaries are losing access to disposable forms of devices and treatments that traditionally have been covered under the DME benefit. The Medicare program does not currently recognize the value of disposable technologies in the home because of a conflict with the decades-old definition of DME, which requires longer term durability of the products at issue. These include all sorts of devices and treatments including negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT), which is used to treat decubitus ulcers incurred by long-term wheelchair users and others who are non-ambulatory.

ITEM Coalition supports the inclusion of disposable NPWT coverage under the DME benefit. As modern disposable items are commonly covered by private payers, since they are easier to use, less expensive, and provide good outcomes. Therefore, we do not view this as an expansion of the DME benefit, but rather, a protection against erosion of what was always intended to be covered under the Medicare DME benefit.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and we look forward to working with you and your staff to further the *Patient Access to Disposable Medical Technology Act of 2015*. Should you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance, please contact Sara Rosta, ITEM Coalition Coordinator, via e-mail at Sara.Rosta@ppsv.com or by calling 202-349-4246.

Thank you again for your support and leadership.

Sincerely,

ITEM Coalition Steering Committee Members

Mark Richert, American Foundation for the Blind (MRichert@afb.net)

Lisa Satterfield, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (LSatterfield@asha.org)

Laura Weidner, National Multiple Sclerosis Society (Laura.Weidner@nmss.org)

Lee Page, Paralyzed Veterans of America (LeeP@pva.org)

Alexandra Bennewith, United Spinal Association (ABennewith@unitedpsinal.org)