



September 24, 2015

**SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY**

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
United States Senate  
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Senator Alexander:

On behalf of the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition, we write to thank you for your early co-sponsorship of Patient Access to Disposable Medical Technology Act of 2015 (S. 1253). Your support of this vital legislation that will increase patient access to innovative, high quality, and cost-effective wound care technology in the home care setting is important to our members. We are eager to work with you to see this legislation become 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.

Again, the ITEM Coalition expresses its deep gratitude for your leadership on the *Patient Access to Disposable Medical Technology Act of 2015*. We look forward to the Senate's favorable consideration of the legislation. 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](mailto:Sara.Rosta@ppsv.com) or by calling 202-349-4246.

Sincerely,

**ITEM Coalition Steering Committee Members**

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