



August 7, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Meeting Request and Two Attachments Regarding Medicare Coverage of Standing Feature and Seat Elevation in Power Wheelchairs

Dear Secretary Azar:

The undersigned members of the Steering Committee of the Independence through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition write to request a meeting with you to discuss Medicare coverage of the “standing feature” and “seat elevation” feature in power wheelchairs.

The 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 clinicians and providers who serve them, including such conditions as multiple sclerosis, paralysis, hearing and speech impairments, cerebral palsy, visual impairments, spinal cord injuries, brain injury, stroke, spina bifida, myositis, limb loss, Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI), and other life-altering conditions.

Attached please find two separate requests for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to reconsider the current coverage policy for standing feature and seat elevation in power wheelchairs. Our coalition members believe CMS should issue benefit category determinations that standing feature and seat elevation meet the definition of durable medical equipment for purposes of Medicare coverage.

We respectfully request this meeting to further discuss these important matters. We note that many members of the disability community, including member organizations of the ITEM Coalition, have not yet had the pleasure of meeting you. We hope that you will meet with us in person to discuss these important priorities for Medicare beneficiaries with mobility impairments.

To contact the ITEM Coalition to follow up and arrange a meeting with us, please contact Peter Thomas and Leif Brierley at 202-466-6550 or Peter.Thomas@PowersLaw.com and Leif.Brierley@PowersLaw.com. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

The ITEM Coalition Steering Committee

Alexandra Bennewith, United Spinal Association
Laura Weidner, National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Dan Ignaszewski, Amputee Coalition
Kim Beer, Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Mark Richert, American Foundation for the Blind
Lee Page, Paralyzed Veterans of America

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Elizabeth Richter; Deputy Center Director, Center for Medicare, CMS
Kate Goodrich, M.D., Director and CMS Chief Medical Officer, Center for Clinical Standards
and Quality, CMS
Laurence Wilson, Director, Chronic Care Policy Group, CMS
Joel Kaiser, Director of DME Policy, CMS