



AAHomecare Washington Update

April 21, 2005

CMS Announces More Focus Groups for Small HME Providers on “Competitive Bidding” and Seeks Email Feedback

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced focus groups in Dallas and Chicago for small home medical equipment (HME) providers to help CMS evaluate the effect of quality standards, accreditation, and the selection process under “competitive bidding.”

By small, CMS means providers that have gross annual revenues of \$3 million or less and/or 10 or fewer full-time equivalents. Both accredited and non-accredited providers are welcome.

In a statement, CMS says it is particularly interested in providers with \$1.5 million or less in revenues to “assist CMS in considering alternatives for the protection” of small HME providers.

CMS plans two focus groups in Dallas, TX on Wednesday, May 4 and two in Chicago, IL on Thursday, May 5.

To register for one of the focus groups, please contact ssfocusgroups@rti.org by *Wednesday, April 27th*. CMS asks that you rank your location and time preferences and provide the following information:

- Name of Business
- Mailing Address
- Phone Number
- Estimated gross revenue (2004)
- Is your business accredited? (Y/N) If yes, by whom?
- Number of FTE's (full time equivalents)
- Primary product categories offered by your business (e.g. oxygen, mobility aids, etc.)

CMS says, “Space is limited to 16 participants per session and registration is on a first-come basis. However, RTI may modify participants to allow participation from the various regions. Input from the various areas is very important. Among those selected to participate, only one participant per company will be allowed.”

The statement notes that, “If you do not receive a confirmatory email by the end of the day on Friday, April 29th, you have not been selected to participate in this round of focus groups.”

However, CMS says those not attending the focus groups can provide feedback on these issues via email by sending comments to ssfocusgroups@rti.org.

To get full details, see the CMS announcement at: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/suppliers/dmepos/dme_focusgroups_annou.pdf.

This is an excellent opportunity to inform CMS about concerns in the homecare community about the competitive bidding provisions of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003.

AAHomecare continues to fight for fair reimbursement for homecare providers and strengthened access for homecare patients by monitoring and providing guidance to CMS on a range of competitive bidding issues, through the Program Advisory and Oversight Committee (PAOC) and other avenues.