



SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY **WEDNESDAY** IN WASHINGTON THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

September 15, 2004

Dear State Leaders,

Wednesday in Washington follows. Thanks again to Heather Allan at FAMES for keeping us on top of the hurricane situation, which is now threatening more states across the Southeast.

### **Critical Push for H.R. 4491 Cosponsors**

This is a critical time to sign on cosponsors for HR 4491, the Hobson-Ford bill that would repeal cuts to reimbursement for oxygen, nebulizers, hospital beds, air mattresses, wheelchairs, and other DME items. The **cuts take effect on January 1, 2005**. See details and current cosponsors at [www.aahomecare.org](http://www.aahomecare.org).

### **Oxygen Price Update: OIG Report**

As reported earlier, AAHomecare has been working on the oxygen pricing issue and will **work with the Office of Inspector General** to discuss methodology for the median FEHBP oxygen price, as mandated by the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. See the Newsroom page at [www.aahomecare.org](http://www.aahomecare.org). This issue reinforces the importance of H.R. 4491.

### **Homecare Community Scrambles to Prepare for Hurricane Ivan**

With Hurricane Ivan bearing down on the Gulf Coast with 140-MPH winds, George Walker of Hattiesburg, Miss. is fortunate that his residence has a back-up generator. The former fire marshal has congestive heart failure and **uses an oxygen compressor 24 hours a day**. While Walker can breathe a little bit easier, he worries about other homecare patients in the path of the hurricane who might lose electricity. He's not alone.

The homecare community, from Florida to Louisiana, is scrambling to make sure patients have continued care and adequate supplies. Ivan is the **third hurricane to hit Florida** in recent weeks, where the homecare community has struggled to help thousands of displaced or powerless homecare patients. To help immediate relief operations, donate at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). There are efforts specific to Florida, one, for instance, led by the *Orlando Sentinel* (see [www.orlandosentinel.com/disasterrelief](http://www.orlandosentinel.com/disasterrelief)).

### **Next Home Health, Hospice & DME Open Door Forum— September 22**

The next CMS open door forum on home health, hospice and DME will be at 2:00 pm ET on September 22, 2004. To call in, dial 1-800-837-1935 and use conference ID 4354467. If you miss the call, you can hear a recording of the call up to three days afterwards. Call 1-800-642-1687 and use the same ID.

### **2005 "Washington Leadership and Legislative Conference" on June 7-10**

**Mark your calendars** — the AAHomecare Washington Leadership & Legislative Conference is set for June 7-10, 2005 at the JW Marriott Hotel, 1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. To focus resources and legislative efforts, AAHomecare has **combined the annual leadership and legislative conferences** for 2005.

## Program Exclusion List for August

The HHS Office of the Inspector General issued August program exclusions in today's *Federal Register*. You will want to review to ensure you do not employ or contract with any of the individuals and companies listed. Search for pages 55639-55642 at *Federal Register* at: [www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/). Or go directly to: <http://frwebgate6.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WAISdocID=26517091210+2+0+0&WAISaction=retrieve>.

## Continuum of Care Workshop, Oct. 25

This one-day workshop at **Medtrade** will include clinical and reimbursement content in home health nursing, re/hab and assistive technology, respiratory/sleep disordered breathing, and prosthetics and orthotics. Visit [www.aahomecare.org](http://www.aahomecare.org).

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