

ACTION ALERT
Please Contact Your Members of Congress Today!

MEDICARE'S COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROGRAM FAILS PATIENTS WITH DIABETES

**New Report in the Journal *Diabetes Care* Supports Findings of
Research Conducted in 2011 by AADE**

A report in the April issue of *Diabetes Care* reveals what many AADE members already know: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) competitive bidding program for mail-order diabetes testing supplies has led to benefactor confusion, longer inpatient hospital stays and higher rates of death, due to patients who were not receiving appropriate testing supplies.

[Read more about the report](#), which was conducted by the National Minority Quality Forum.

The report reinforces a study AADE conducted in 2011, eight months after the competitive bidding program for mail-order suppliers of diabetes testing equipment was established in January 2011.

Within that year, widespread anecdotal reports suggested that the suppliers were denying access to the specific brands and types of equipment that had been promised would be available on Medicare.gov.

To determine the veracity of these reports, AADE surveyed contract suppliers in the nine markets via telephone in August 2011. Surveyors were furnished with a list of contract suppliers and all 20 of the unique suppliers listed were contacted.

The survey found that the contract suppliers, on average, offered only 38 percent of the products that are listed on www.medicare.gov. In some cases, suppliers offered products that were not listed on www.medicare.gov. The results also demonstrated that beneficiaries in competitive bidding areas do not have access to most brands available in the market, or to brands most commonly prescribed by physicians and selected by beneficiaries. Of the 9 brands identified in a December 2010 report as the top mail order diabetes testing supply brands by percent of market share, contract suppliers offered an average of 1.44 brands (16%).

What AADE has done since 2011

In 2014, AADE conducted a similar study but with insulin pumps, which had been added to the competitive bidding program. Unfortunately, we found similar results. Of these 29 different suppliers contacted, only 17 reported carrying insulin pumps and 18 reported carrying replacement supplies and reservoirs.

This past February, AADE met with members of the Government Accounting Office (GAO), an independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress and investigates how federal agencies spend taxpayer dollars. They had heard about our secret shopper survey and wanted to learn more. During that meeting, we provided an overview of the previous two studies and diabetes educator members shared some of their experiences with the competitive bidding program.

In preparation for the meeting, we conducted a short survey of the membership, finding that 85.5% felt their patients were still being negatively affected by the competitive bidding program, and 84.6% felt the resources provided by Medicare were not effective.

AADE is also currently working with industry partners and CMS to discuss the shortcomings of the competitive bidding program and address protections for beneficiary recipients.

What you can do

Please contact your U.S. Representative and Senators about this issue. Let them know that you want the Medicare competitive bidding program fixed.