

# **CMS FORCES REDUNDANT ACCREDITATION FOR COMMUNITY PHARMACY**

## **H.R. 616 Preserves Patient Access**

Community pharmacists are the only licensed medical professionals that must meet new CMS accreditation requirements as Medicare suppliers of Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS).

Congress must pass H.R. 616 to ensure pharmacists are treated equally with all other licensed medical professionals thereby preserving patient access.

### **The CMS requirement is redundant, unnecessary, and unfairly targets community pharmacists:**

- Community pharmacists are subject to oversight and regulation both as state-licensed medical professionals and as state-licensed businesses. These regulations already carry civil and criminal sanctions for violations.
- In September 2008, CMS **exempted** the following medical professionals:

Physicians	Occupational Therapists	Physician Assistants
Physical Therapists	Nurse Practitioners	Clinical Nurse Specialists
Certified Nurse-Midwives	Clinical Social Workers	Registered Dietitians
Nutritional professionals	Clinical Psychologists	Prosthetists
Audiologists	Orthotists	Opticians
Qualified Speech-Language Pathologists		Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists
- CMS offers no valid reason why state-licensed pharmacists should not also receive this exemption.
- Accreditation fees and training, education and implementation costs will total at least \$5,000- \$7,000.
- All pharmacists must meet these expenses simply to obtain a Part B supplier number so that they can continue to help their patients with their DMEPOS needs.
- Given that only 6% -8% of an average independent pharmacy's annual sales come from DMEPOS and with the low margin on those supplies, many independents will be forced out of the program.

### **The CMS requirement will hurt patient access:**

- Many community pharmacies will discontinue cost-prohibitive DMEPOS service.
- Community pharmacists are the trusted, primary source for beneficiaries to receive DMEPOS supplies, counsel, and training on the effective use of DMEPOS to achieve the best health outcomes.
- Beneficiaries in underserved areas will be forced to travel dozens of additional miles for supplies and expert advice previously obtained closer to home.
- Ironically, the new CMS DMEPOS regulations will pressure Medicare patients towards mail order and internet operations, where fraud is most prevalent.
- DMEPOS provided by pharmacists includes: diabetes test supplies, canes, walkers, wheelchairs, portable commodes, compression hose, mastectomy prosthetics, neck and body orthotics, wound care and other products and services vital for patients.

CMS should expel and prosecute fraudulent suppliers instead of imposing unnecessary costs upon legitimate licensed medical professionals that are helping patients. Pharmacists must be exempted from the new CMS accreditation requirement to ensure patients have continued access to quality care.

**Congress must pass H.R. 616 to preserve patient access to DMEPOS Services.**

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