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NCART and AAHomecare Applaud Rep. Zeldin for Legislation to Protect CRT Accessories

Washington, DC – The American Association for Homecare (AAHomecare) and the National Coalition for Assistive and Rehab Technology (NCART) today applauded Representative Lee Zeldin (R-NY) for introducing the H.R.3229, a new bill that will protect access to complex rehab wheelchair accessories by preventing the application of pricing information derived from the Medicare competitive bid program.

“I would like to thank Representative Zeldin for introducing this important piece of legislation,” said Bill Tobia, the managing member of Home Medical Equipment, LLC in Garden City, New York and dual member of AAHomecare and NCART. “We are working together to put the full weight of the industry behind this simple and practical piece of legislation that will protect the people with disabilities who rely upon this equipment.”

This legislation is to address the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ (CMS) plan to apply competitive bid program pricing to complex rehab wheelchair accessories effective January 1, 2016. This plan violates the intent of past Congressional legislation and will create significant access problems for Medicare beneficiaries and other people with disabilities. This bill will provide a technical correction to clarify that CMS cannot apply Medicare competitive bidding program pricing information to these accessories used with complex rehab wheelchairs.

“The accessories used with complex rehab wheelchairs are what allow these wheelchairs to be individually configured for people with high level disabilities to meet their medical needs and maximize independence. Without the right accessories, a person will not get the right complex rehab wheelchair”, said Don Clayback, Executive Director of NCART. “This issue has garnered the concern and support of national disability rights organizations who recognize the negative consequences if changes are not made. The introduction and passage of this legislation is needed to prevent major access issues from occurring in 2016.”

“This legislation will protect consumers and help get this specialized equipment to those who need it the most,” said Tom Ryan, president and CEO of AAHomecare. “Congress has already recognized that highly sophisticated complex rehab wheelchairs and accessories require a commitment to provide advanced services, training and personnel to ensure appropriate use, and that these products are very different from standard wheelchairs. When CMS refused a formal Congressional request to rescind the application of bid rates to complex rehab accessories, it became clear that clarifying legislation was needed.”

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The National Coalition for Assistive and Rehab Technology (NCART) works to ensure individuals with significant disabilities and medical conditions have adequate access to individually configured Complex Rehab Technology (CRT) products and supporting services. Visit www.ncart.us.

The American Association for Homecare represents providers of home medical or durable medical equipment and services who serve the needs of millions of Americans who require prescribed oxygen therapy, wheelchairs, enteral feeding, and other medical equipment, services, and supplies at home. Visit www.aahomecare.org.