



May 7, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
521 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2267 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Protect Medicaid Beneficiary Access to Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (“DMEPOS”)

Dear House and Senate Leaders:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition, we write with urgency to underscore the critical need to protect Medicaid beneficiaries’ access to durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (“DMEPOS”) as Congress considers significant Medicaid budget cuts in the reconciliation package currently under negotiation. The ITEM Coalition typically does not address reimbursement issues and tends to focus on coverage and coding of assistive devices and technologies. However, when significant threats to reimbursement would materially impact patient access to care, we feel it is important to weigh-in with our members’ concerns.

The ITEM Coalition is a national consumer- and clinician-led coalition comprised of over 100 national organizations advocating for access to and coverage of assistive devices, technologies, and related services for people with injuries, illnesses, disabilities, and chronic conditions of all ages. Our members represent individuals with a wide range of disabling conditions, as well as the providers who serve them, including spinal cord injury, brain injury, stroke, limb loss, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, hearing, speech, and visual impairments, and other life-altering conditions.

Medicaid provides coverage for over 72 million Americans, including low-income families, children, older adults, and people with disabilities—populations that experience much higher rates of complex medical and functional needs compared to those who are not enrolled in Medicaid. For these individuals, access to DMEPOS is not a luxury—it is essential. These items are a lifeline to beneficiaries enabling safe, effective, and patient-centered care in the home

and community, helping to prevent costly institutional care, and promoting greater functional independence and quality of life.

The ITEM Coalition urges Congressional leadership to recognize that any reductions in Medicaid reimbursement or coverage for DMEPOS would result in serious—and entirely avoidable—consequences. Such cuts would not only undermine the health and dignity of Medicaid beneficiaries, but also contradict the program’s goals of promoting access to quality, cost-effective healthcare services. These harmful potential outcomes include:

- Disruption in access to medically necessary equipment and supplies
- Increased emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and institutional placements
- Higher long-term health care costs for states and the federal government
- Loss of independence, mobility, and quality of life for Medicaid beneficiaries

DMEPOS also plays a crucial role in delivering long-term services and supports (“LTSS”), which account for a significant portion of Medicaid spending. In fact, more than half of all Medicaid expenditures are directed toward LTSS, with 72% delivered in home and community-based settings (“HCBS”)—settings that are not only preferred by beneficiaries but are also more cost-effective than institutional alternatives, such as nursing homes.

For many Americans, Medicaid is the only avenue to access these critical assistive devices and technologies. Reducing access to DMEPOS would not only deepen already-existing disparities, but also reverse significant progress that has been made in expanding home- and community-based care over the past three decades while shifting costs to higher-acuity, higher-cost settings. Maintaining coverage and adequate reimbursement is essential to ensuring that Medicaid continues to fulfill its role as a safety net program that supports better health, economic stability, and independent living.

For these reasons, the ITEM Coalition strongly urges Congress to protect Medicaid coverage and reimbursement for DMEPOS. We welcome the opportunity to work with you on sustainable, patient-centered policies that ensure access to cost-effective care in the most appropriate setting.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to the health and dignity of Medicaid beneficiaries. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact ITEM Coalition co-coordinators Peter Thomas and Michael Barnett at Peter.Thomas@PowersLaw.com or Michael.Barnett@PowersLaw.com or call 202-466-6550.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Members of the ITEM Coalition

Access Ready, Inc.

ACCSES

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

All Wheels Up

ALS Association*

American Association for Homecare

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Association of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

American Association on Health and Disability

American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine

American Macular Degeneration Foundation

American Cochlear Implant Alliance

Amputee Coalition*

Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs

Association of Rehabilitation Nurses

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Center on Aging and Disability Policy

Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation*

Clinician Task Force

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)

CureLGMD2i Foundation

3DA

Epilepsy Foundation of America

Institute for Matching Person and Technology

International Registry of Rehabilitation Technology Suppliers

Lakeshore Foundation

Long Island Center for Independent Living (LICIL)

Muscular Dystrophy Association

National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics

National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

National Respite Coalition

NCART

Perkins School for the Blind

Rifton Equipment

RESNA

Spina Bifida Association*

Team Gleason*

Unite 2 Fight Paralysis

United Cerebral Palsy

United Spinal Association*

****ITEM Coalition Steering Committee Member***