



**Georgia Association of Medical Equipment Services (GAMES)
North Carolina Association for Medical Equipment Services (NCAMES)
JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

**INTRODUCTION OF THE HOME OXYGEN PATIENT PROTECTION ACT
H.R. 2373**

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Contacts: Beth Bowen - ncames@nc.rr.com, (919) 387-1221
Teresa Tatum - teresa@gameshme.org 770-578-3999

After working closely with US Representatives Tom Price, M.D. (GA-R) & Heath Shuler (NC-D), GAMES & NCAMES are excited to announce the introduction of the new Home Oxygen Patient Protection Act (HR 2373).

Last evening, Price and Shuler introduced legislation to directly repeal the cap on Home Oxygen Therapy rental payments for Medicare patients and restore the benefit to provide payments for the period of medical need.

Prior to the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005, Medicare paid for home oxygen therapy through a bundled rental and service payment that included the cost of equipment, services, repairs, and supplies as long as the therapy was medically necessary. A provision in the DRA limited rental payments for home oxygen therapy to 36 months of continuous use. After the 36th month, Congress instructed CMS to establish adequate payments for the continued care of home oxygen patients.

Under the current rule (October 2008), CMS did not establish adequate payments which resulted in unnecessary complications for Medicare beneficiaries on home oxygen therapy, hospitals trying to discharge patients, and small businesses across America. The full effect of this rule on our nations Medicare patients (most of whom are elderly and disabled) is still not known at this time.

“We are very pleased to work with Congressman Price to introduce this bill”, said Teresa Tatum, Executive Director of the Georgia Association of Medical Equipment Services. “We believe a direct repeal of the Oxygen Cap is what’s best for Medicare patients in Georgia. The HOPP Act offers a simple, common-sense solution to address the immediate risk to home oxygen patients as well as the providers who care for them”

Beth Bowen, Executive Director of the North Carolina Association for Medical Equipment Services commented, “Congressman Shuler continues to be a champion for Medicare patients and for our industry - his work to protect small businesses and the patients they serve across the country is well known and we are fortunate to have his leadership.”

GAMES & NCAMES continue to work with AAHomecare and other industry stakeholders to advance a long-term reform of the Oxygen benefit while members of both associations recognize an urgent need for an immediate short-term solution alongside reform.

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