



June 28, 2021

Sent electronically

Rafiat Eshett, MPA
Chief, Non-Institutional Policy Section
Bureau of Health Plan Policy
Ohio Department of Medicaid
50 W. Town Street, Suite 400
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: FMAP Increase to Support the Provision of HCBS

Dear Ms. Eshett,

In response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and logistical and financial strain it has caused on the American healthcare system, Congress enacted section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Section 9871 provides a temporary 10% increase to a State's FMAP for dates between April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Per CMS guidance, States may apply the 10% increase in FMAP to, among other things, "home health care services" under section 1905(a)(7), that "enhance, expand, or strengthens" beneficiary access to home and community-based services (HCBS). "Home health care services" have been broadly defined by CMS in regulations to include "medical supplies, equipment, and appliances suitable for use in any setting in which normal life activities take place," such as the patient's home.

On behalf of OAMES, AAHomecare and NCART members, **we ask that you consider using some of the additional FMAP funds towards the home medical equipment (HME) services benefit. We respectfully request that ODM increase the DMEPOS fee schedule by 5% for a two-year period.**

The HME industry has played a vital role in serving the most vulnerable Ohioans during this pandemic and we have been hit hard by rising costs of products and staffing and the challenges of serving patients under extraordinary conditions. Our state's HME providers have been engaged at the front lines of the ongoing pandemic, especially in support of Ohio's Medicaid enrollees, ensuring they can manage their short-term or chronic healthcare challenges in their homes. These efforts have helped reduce the intense pressure on hospitals and clinicians during the pandemic.

As has been the case for other parts of the health care sector, the pandemic has caused costs for HME providers to increase drastically. The acquisition costs of the equipment are rising dramatically due to supply availability and supply chain disruption. This does not include the personal protective equipment (PPE), costs which have skyrocketed, and are vital to protecting patients and employees while providing services in a home-based setting. At the same time, staffing costs have increased due to the need to use contract staffing and pay retention bonuses to keep existing employees. Payment levels have not been adjusted to reflect these increases and with our narrow margins – especially for those we serve on

Medicaid – suppliers find themselves in a precarious financial position. Many in the HME community are small businesses and have had difficulty weathering these challenges from the pandemic.

We request a meeting with you and your staff to discuss the details of our request and provide supplemental information in support of this request. OAMES would like to be a partner in the process and help the state ensure we can continue to serve those who are homecare dependent in their daily lives. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andy Wilhelm

Andy Wilhelm
Advanced Medical Equipment
OAMES President

Kam Yuricich

Kamela (Kam) Yuricich
OAMES
Executive Director

Don Clayback

Don Clayback
NCART
Executive Director

Laura Williard

Laura Williard
AAHomecare
Vice President, Payer Relations

CC: Director Maureen Corcoran – ODM
Ogbe Aideyman – ODM
Mark Rogers – ODM
Ryan Spindler – ODM
Dennis Frazier – ODM

OAMES Contact information:

Kam Yuricich, Executive Director
Phone: 614-581-2958 mobile
Email: kam@oames.org