

## **2012 Democratic National Convention Host City Called “Center of Healthcare Disaster”**

*NCAMES Invites Democratic Leaders to Visit Charlotte HME Businesses, Witness Job Killing Medicare Program First-Hand*

(Charlotte, N.C.) North Carolina’s leader in home medical equipment advocacy and education, NCAMES, is inviting Democratic leaders to visit Charlotte HME businesses in the run-up to the 2012 Democratic National Convention to witness the devastating effects of the Federal government’s job killing Medicare bidding program first-hand. Since its launch on January 1, 2011, the program has blocked 80% of Charlotte HME businesses who were able to provide equipment for patients in 2010 from continuing to service them or any new patients who use Medicare to pay for essential medical equipment.

Over the past month NCAMES member companies in Charlotte have been collecting reports from patients unable to secure home medical equipment (HME) services due to this intrusive new Medicare program. Charlotte is one of nine metropolitan areas across the country targeted for a 'Round 1' nationwide rollout of the program which severely restricts the number of companies allowed to supply equipment such as home oxygen systems, power wheelchairs, walkers, and hospital beds to thousands of seniors and patients in need.

“Charlotte is the center of a healthcare disaster,” Marcia Ladd, president of the NCAMES Board of Directors said, adding, “Having the Democratic National Convention here will bring healthcare policy makers and administration officials face-to-face with the same local patients, caretakers, and HME providers suffering under the unrealistic restrictions being imposed by Medicare’s bidding program.”

According to Ladd, NCAMES member companies in Charlotte are offering to host Democratic leaders and explain how Medicare is forcing them into service contraction, ‘suicide bidding’ to try to keep their patients under their care, and other job-killing business decisions just to try to keep their doors open.

“The Obama administration talks about creating jobs, while at the same time promoting a seriously flawed Medicare program that is drying-up competition, severely restricting patient access to life-sustaining medical equipment, and driving HME providers out of business. For those that remain open, they have had to lay off workers,” said Ladd.

NCAMES recently hosted a two-day legislative conference in Raleigh, N.C., where industry leaders discussed how to address the patient reports of service interruptions. Unable to access information on where to get new providers from Medicare resources, patients are turning back to their old providers for help, even when those providers are no longer allowed by the Federal government to service them.

“Our members in Charlotte whom the Feds say can no longer service their loyal customers are good people, and they’re helping patients with referrals to competitors, as crazy as that sounds. The bidding

program has created such a void for patients that our providers who have been locked out of that program do not know how to operate,” Ladd pointed out.

In 2010, NCAMES began a proactive outreach program to its member companies throughout the state to help educate them and their patients about the Medicare changes beginning this year. ‘Round 2’ of Medicare’s flawed bidding program will spread across many other parts of North Carolina and the United States in 2012.

NCAMES is continuing to promote the industry website, [CompetitiveBiddingConcerns.com](http://CompetitiveBiddingConcerns.com), where HME providers can report problems with the new Medicare rules and is adding new information on a regular basis to its advocacy website [SaveJobsNC.com](http://SaveJobsNC.com) in an attempt to alert the public to the dangers caused by implementation of the Medicare bidding program.

For more information visit [SaveJobsNC.com](http://SaveJobsNC.com) or contact NCAMES Executive Director Beth Bowen at [beth@ncames.org](mailto:beth@ncames.org) or (919) 387-1221.