



*Preserving access to quality care*  
**PRESS RELEASE**

CONTACT: Beth Bowen, 919-387-1221, [beth@ncames.org](mailto:beth@ncames.org)

## **NC Home Medical Equipment Industry Aids Haiti Relief Efforts**

### **Hospital beds, walkers, other supplies sent overseas to help families and children**

(Raleigh, N.C.) North Carolina home medical equipment service providers have donated truckloads of durable medical equipment to the people of Haiti in the five weeks since that country's devastating earthquake, according to the North Carolina Association for Medical Equipment Services (NCAMES).

An estimated three million people were affected by the quake, with international aid agencies partnering with individuals, business communities, and government leaders to collect and distribute supplies on an ongoing basis. As the disaster has unfolded, NCAMES and peer home medical equipment industry groups have been contacting their membership with requests for essential post-acute medical care and equipment such as oxygen concentrators, crutches, gauze, bandages and wheelchairs.

Griffin Home Health Care, a 27-year-old company serving patients in Charlotte and Gastonia, was one of many North Carolina companies to answer the call for aid. "We had a contact that was interested in hospital beds and we donated about 25 of them, some walkers, and commode chairs," owner Bill Griffin said.

In addition to essential medical equipment, NCAMES members have been actively lending financial resources to the relief effort. AeroFlow Healthcare in Western North Carolina, for example, is donating five percent of its gross revenue generated by new referrals through March 12th to a relief organization to help distribute life-saving food, clean water, blankets, and tents to children and families.

"During our Winter Meeting in January our keynote speaker challenged each attendee to reach into their pockets and pull out money right then and there to give to the American Red Cross for Haiti relief," said Marcia Ladd, president of the NCAMES Board of Directors.

Ladd -- whose company, Triangle Aftercare in Durham, sent two cargo vans full of ambulatory aids on a plane soon after the quake hit -- said NCAMES and peer associations in the home medical equipment industry are utilizing their organizational infrastructure to generate the largest possible response to pleas for aid coming from relief organizations.

"We've seen a massive response from our industry in North Carolina which is continuing in the weeks since the quake," she said.

The ability to respond quickly to the call for aid is indicative of how home medical equipment service providers across the state deal with emergency services for patients who need immediate delivery or maintenance of equipment at all hours of the day or night, regardless of the situation. Highly trained staff, localized customer support, and general preparedness for the unknown, such as gassing up service vehicles and equipping their tires with chains in advance of inclement weather, are common elements to how NCAMES member companies do business.

*(more)*

Haiti Relief  
2-2-2-2

In addition to aiding Haiti relief efforts, NCAMES is involved in a public education campaign to ensure patient access to quality care. The campaign is centered on driving support for H.R. 3790, new legislation to correct a Federal Medicare bidding program implemented in late 2009. Unless H.R. 3790 is passed in the next few months, over 500 home medical equipment businesses in North Carolina face the prospect of being blocked from servicing patients who use Medicare to pay for their equipment, forcing most of these companies to close their doors.

For more information on NCAMES, visit [www.ncames.org](http://www.ncames.org).

#### ABOUT NCAMES

*With close to 300 member companies and growing, the North Carolina Association for Medical Equipment Services (NCAMES) is the statewide leader in preserving access to safe, affordable, and therapeutic home medical equipment. We provide advocacy and education to home medical equipment (HME) providers statewide dedicated to helping North Carolina's growing senior population and patients of all ages gain more mobility and experience a high quality of life in the comfort and privacy of their own homes. NCAMES was instrumental in passing the nation's first HME licensure law which has been working to ensure quality home health care since 1995, and fully supports pending legislation H.R. 3790 to continue HME access for patients in need. For more information, visit [www.ncames.org](http://www.ncames.org) or call (919)-387-1221.*

###