



American Association of  
NURSE PRACTITIONERS™

## **Ensure Timely Patient Access to Durable Medical Equipment**

### **ACTION NEEDED: Authorize NPs to Document Evaluations for Durable Medical Equipment**

Congress should enact legislation that will authorize nurse practitioners to document face-to-face encounters with Medicare patients to assess the need to order all durable medical equipment (DME).

### **Background:**

Nurse practitioners have a long history of providing high quality, cost effective care to the Medicare patients in their practices. They have been safely and independently ordering durable medical equipment, including items such as wheelchairs, hospital beds, glucometers, crutches, walkers, and canes, since 1997 when Congress authorized NPs to receive direct reimbursement for Medicare Part B services. Nurse practitioners have been independently and safely ordering durable medical equipment (DME) for their Medicare patients since 1997.

However, a provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires that a physician document that the nurse practitioner has conducted a face-to-face encounter with the patient within the six months prior to ordering certain DME. NPs do not object to the requirement for a face-to-face encounter with the patient for whom they order DME, but it is an unreasonable and costly administrative burden to require that a physician sign off on these DME orders. This additional requirement increases the cost of patient care and leads to unnecessary delays in Medicare patients obtaining the medical equipment they need. This new documentation requirement will go into effect on October 1st unless CMS takes action.

**Request: The American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) urges Members of Congress to take steps to permanently delay implementation of this rule, or create more reasonable requirements by decreasing the list of durable medical equipment that require a documentation of the face to face visit, and revising the requirement that a physician must document on the patient's medical record that the face to face visit has occurred. Please explain to CMS the disruptions in care this regulation will cause to your constituents who choose to receive care from a nurse practitioner.**

For additional information, please contact the AANP Federal Health Policy Office at 703/740-2529 or [federalpolicy@aanp.org](mailto:federalpolicy@aanp.org).