

# Consumer How to CHOOSE A MEDICAL EQUIPMENT PROVIDER

If you find that you need to rent or purchase medical equipment, you may want to research providers carefully before making any decisions.

People with long-term or chronic illness find that medical equipment can improve their comfort and quality of life.

Your doctor can prescribe the type of device or equipment you need. Follow the correct guidelines, and then choose a company in your area who has the equipment and supplies that best meet your needs.

## RESPIRATION EXPERTISE

People with respiratory problems should look for a medical equipment provider whose staff has training and expertise with CPAP machines and supplies, bottled oxygen and other equipment.

A certified respiratory therapist on staff can guide you on how to use the equipment safely and effectively.

Choose a company that delivers the correct supplies at the right time and that employs skilled and compassionate people.

## PERSONAL SERVICE

Locally-based providers are always best. You are likely to receive personalized service. They can also respond quickly in case of trouble.

Equipment fails and supplies run out. When your provider is in your community, you can usually reach someone right away.

A local provider can send someone quickly. Larger companies may stock supplies a few hundred miles away. That means you may have to wait days for a technician or urgently needed supplies to arrive.

## INSURANCE/GOVERNMENT BILLING

Medicare, Medicaid and Insurance often cover medical equipment and supplies. Choose a provider who is experienced in handling patient billing for these plans.

Government regulations and documentation are often complicated. There are deadlines to meet and rules to follow. The equipment provider may be able to bill Medicare or Medicaid directly, which lessens the deductible you will have to pay. It also speeds up the entire billing process.

## MOBILITY EXPERTISE

When you are dealing with mobility issues, look for a provider with experience in mobility aids. They should offer you a wide range of walkers, scooters and wheelchairs.

While you may only need a simple

cane now, you might need more advanced aids in the future.

Creating a good working relationship with a medical equipment provider will help you as your needs change over time.

## OTHER SUPPLIES

Medical needs change over time. Be sure to choose a company that carries a wide array of medical supplies.

In the future, you might need ostomy supplies; diabetic shoes, hosiery and supplies; home oxygen; CPAP machines and supplies and other types of treatment and monitoring equipment. Choose a medical equipment provider who becomes familiar with your needs over the years and who can develop a sense of you as a person.

Speak with your doctor and staff about good companies in your area. Their recommendations will help you find the right company for your needs.

A good track record of customer service, the ability to handle Medicare and Medicaid billing, and trained staff should be the factors to guide you in your search for an excellent medical equipment provider.

