October 30, 2017

Dear Representative:

The Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) write to respectfully request that you cosponsor bipartisan legislation, H.R. 3730, that Representatives Lee Zeldin (R-NY) and John Larson (D-CT) introduced to permanently exempt manual Complex Rehab Technology (CRT) wheelchairs and accessories for people with disabilities and chronic conditions from Medicare’s Competitive Bid Program (CBP). This important legislation will protect Medicare beneficiary access to manual complex rehab technology, as well as essential components known as wheelchair “accessories.”

The undersigned members of the Technology and Telecommunications Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) write to respectfully request that you cosponsor bipartisan legislation, H.R. 3730, that Representatives Lee Zeldin (R-NY) and John Larson (D-CT) introduced to permanently exempt manual Complex Rehab Technology (CRT) wheelchairs and accessories for people with disabilities and chronic conditions from Medicare’s Competitive Bid Program (CBP). This important legislation will protect Medicare beneficiary access to manual complex rehab technology, as well as essential components known as wheelchair “accessories.”

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The Technology and Telecommunications Task Force focuses on national policy regarding matters of telecommunications and technology, including assistive technology, in order to help move society toward our ultimate goal of full inclusion for all people with a disability.

Power and manual CRT wheelchairs and CRT accessories or components are essential for a small segment of wheelchair users, about 10 percent of the Medicare population, with significant disabilities such as ALS, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury. For these wheelchair users, a wheelchair is not complete, usable or even safe without the appropriate complex rehab technology components included.

On June 23, 2017, CMS took important action to protect access to CRT accessories in power wheelchairs for Medicare beneficiaries with disabilities and chronic conditions. CMS announced it will not be applying Medicare Competitive Bid Program (CBP) reimbursement levels to Complex Rehab Technology (CRT) Group 3 power wheelchair accessories. This policy change averts significant cuts that were scheduled to go into effect July 1, 2017 and avoids drastic reductions in access to this specialized mobility technology for Medicare.
beneficiaries with significant disabilities. The CCD Technology and Telecommunications Task Force is grateful to CMS and Members of Congress who supported this important action.

Unfortunately, CMS did not extend the new rule to CRT manual wheelchairs, making a legislative fix necessary to preserve equal access for Medicare beneficiaries to manual CRT wheelchair components and related accessories.

Congressional action is urgently needed to permanently help Medicare beneficiaries who are manual CRT wheelchair users obtain the accessories and components they need. Regardless of injury, illness, disability or chronic condition, all Medicare beneficiaries should be eligible for the same access to medical necessary mobility devices, services, and related components. We urge you to cosponsor Representatives Zeldin and Larson’s legislation, H.R. 3730, to ensure that Medicare beneficiary access to components and accessories used with CRT manual wheelchairs is protected.

To sign on as a cosponsor to the House bill, please contact Matt Scott (Matthew.Scott@mail.house.gov) in Representative Zeldin's office or Sylvia Lee (Sylvia.Lee@mail.house.gov) in Representative Larson's office.