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April 7, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3006

Dear Chairman Pallone:

Due to COVID-19 there are daily news reports about the demand for ventilators in hospitals across our nation.

H.R. 4945, Safeguarding Medicare Access to Respiratory Therapy Act of 2019, is pending in the Energy and Commerce Committee and has been referred to the Subcommittee on Health. The bill would delay the inclusion of medical ventilators from competitive acquisition programs under Medicare for five years.

While now is not the time during the Coronavirus Pandemic to make a decision about Medicare's purchase of ventilators, the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) believes that Medicare should do competitive bidding for ventilators.

The NRLN's definition of competitive bidding is the business model:

-- Medicare would determine annual demand for ventilators, quality definitions, monthly scheduled deliveries.

-- Identify suppliers capable of producing ventilators. Issue a request for quote (RFQ) that includes specifications, volume level and capability of meeting time frame for shipments and billing requirements.

-- Select the top 2 or 3 bids (best prices) with capability of delivering quality ventilators on time. Determine percent of orders to award to 2 or 3 suppliers. Multiple suppliers ensures supply in the event one supplier cannot perform as required.

Hospitals, urban and rural, should be able to acquire ventilators at the price under Medicare's contract.

If you would like to know more about how NRLN views competitive bidding, please ask a member of your staff to contact me or Alyson Parker, the NRLN's Executive Director in Washington, DC at 813-545-6792 or executivedirector@nrln.org.

Sincerely,

Bill Kadereit, President,
National Retiree Legislative Network
Phone: 972-722-5928
Email: president@nrln.org

