

Written by Rob Brant
Friday, 12 February 2010 11:04

Buena Park, CA - Over 70 HME Providers, manufacturer's representatives, oxygen patients and other industry advocates attended the Southern California Rally for HR-3790 hosted by AMEPA and the California Association of Medical Product Suppliers (CAMPS).

Rob Brant, AMEPA President, opened the meeting by introducing a member of Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez's (D-Garden Grove, CA) district staff. The conference room erupted into applause as the announcement was made that Congresswoman Sanchez has agreed to co-sponsor HR-3790, unofficially moving the total up to 141.

As part of the trip Brant and AMEPA Executive Director, Sean Schwinghammer, visited district offices with local business owners to discuss the problems of the bidding program and to ask for co-sponsorship for the bill which will give the government the same projected saving without needlessly closing business or limiting a patient's access to quality products and timely services.

More than 75% of the attendees were from Los Angeles, Orange County and San Diego; outside of the Riverside MSA. Even though these business owners may not have to bid until next year, many business owners joined Brant and Schwinghammer on Wednesday and Thursday afternoon at legislative meetings throughout Southern California.

Jim Leedom, owner of Home Health Depot in Lomita, part of the Los Angeles MSA, was among the volunteers who visited legislative offices in the districts where he works and lives.

"The rally was a great opportunity to learn about the problem's that affected the Riverside MSA and will likely occur again. I always wished there was something I could have done to stop the 36 month oxygen cap and other congressional decisions that have affected my businesses and the patients I serve. I feel compelled to do my part to stop Competitive Bidding today, even though it will not immediately impact my patients or my business"

Upcoming PAOC Agenda

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During the conference, participants reviewed the materials used to educate legislators about the flawed program and the benefits of HR-3790. CAMPS member Esta Willman, who serves on the Program Advisory and Oversight Committee (PAOC) discussed the previous PAOC meetings and the upcoming February 23rd meeting in Baltimore.

When Willman explained that the agenda for the upcoming PAOC meeting included how to subdivide the Los Angeles MSA you could hear the air being sucked out of the room.

After the rally Willman said "I think the reality of the program stunned the Round Two providers when they learned how focused CMS is on pushing this program beyond Round One.

The rally was a free event, made possible by sponsors: Airsep, Invacare, The Med Group, Philips/Respironics, Pride, Resmed, and The VGM Group. During the two days in Southern California, local providers met with the following legislative offices:

- Xavier Becerra
- Ken Calvert
- Susan Davis
- Jane Harman
- Duncan Hunter
- Darrel Issa
- Buck McKeon
- Adam Schiff
- Diane Watson
- Henry Waxman

For most district staff, it was the first time that they heard about the problems of out of area, inexperienced and unlicensed bid winners; and the reduction of over 50% of the areas oxygen providers due to the October implementation of mandatory accreditation and \$50,000 surety bond.

[Click to view the flyer for the rally](#)