



■ It's never been more important to attend Medtrade, says Kevin Gaffney. **See page 30.**



■ **Product Spotlight:** This month we feature pediatric products like these animal nebulizer compression systems from Roscoe Medical. **See pages 36-37**



■ Are you getting discounts from manufacturers as a result of competitive bidding? If yes, how much? **See results on page 42.**

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# HME NEWS

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# Contract suppliers wait for rush

*Confusion, kinks dominate first weeks of national mail-order program for diabetes supplies*

BY THERESA FLAHERTY, Managing Editor

**YARMOUTH, Maine** – Contract suppliers say they've seen an increase in patient volume in the first few weeks of the national mail-order program for diabetes supplies, but

it's likely just the tip of the iceberg. "We think only a portion of displaced patients are coming to the market (right now)," said Mike Iskra, CEO of contract supplier Diabetes Care Club.

The mail-order program went

**Stakeholders apply pressure, stand ready**  
See story page 3  
**Where's the new pricing for Round 1?**  
See story page 3

live nationwide on July 1. Because most Medicare beneficiaries likely received one final three-month shipment from their previous suppliers, it could be another month or two before they need to find a new

MAIL ORDER SEE PAGE 41

## Therafirm unwinds

Therafirm, a Knit-Rite company, has moved its North Carolina operations from Ellerbe to Hamlet. The newly renovated, state-of-the-art facility allows the company to expand its capabilities and capacity.



## CONSOLIDATION 'No-man's land' for oxygen patients

BY THERESA FLAHERTY, Managing Editor

**W**HEN A local competitor closed its doors recently, provider Tyler Riddle had bad news for its capped-out oxygen patients: He couldn't take them.

"I am not going to take capped patients regardless of how nice a guy I am," said Riddle, vice president of Albany, Ga.-based MRS Homecare. "We give them a letter explaining that they are in this magical doughnut hole and there's nothing we can do. They are just shocked."

Under the oxygen cap—implemented in 2009—providers cannot bill for patients after 36 months, but they must still service them.

Once patients hit 60 months, providers can supply a new oxygen

OXYGEN SEE PAGE 21

## The patient collections race

BY LIZ BEAULIEU, Editor

**YARMOUTH, Maine** – Invacare's decision to close Invacare HCS on Aug. 30 has set off a blitz of activity among patient collections companies.

In the wake of the news, Strategic AR and Brightree, which previously had a marketing agreement with Invacare HCS, announced that they would integrate their solutions. Then A/R Allegiance Group announced it had partnered with Dave Bargmann, co-founder



Kevin Winkley D. Bargmann

of HCS, to ramp up sales and marketing efforts.

Invacare has declined to say how many Invacare HCS customers are

up for grabs. But when Invacare bought HCS from Bargmann and his wife, Lisa Bargmann, in 2008, it had 300 customers.

### 'JOINED AT THE HIP'

While it's not uncommon for companies in the industry to have agreements whereby they recommend each other's respective products and services, Strategic AR and Brightree have plans for an "extremely tight integration" of their patient collections and

COLLECT SEE PAGE 40

## Complex rehab as capped rental?

BY ELIZABETH DEPREY, Associate Editor

**WASHINGTON** – CMS proposes saving millions of dollars by reclassifying certain HME as capped-rental items, but stakeholders say this move doesn't make sense for

pediatric and tilt-in-space complex wheelchairs.

CMS issued a proposed rule July 3 that, among other things, clarifies the definition of routinely purchased equipment, effectively making about 80 codes, including cer-

tain complex rehab codes, capped-rental items.

"They're basing these savings on the fact that most capped rental items are returned after eight months," said Rita Hostak,

CAPPED SEE PAGE 24