



## HME Providers Offer Significant Support Services to End Users Requiring Ventilators

**Mechanical ventilators are a type of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) that provide life sustaining support to medically fragile patients.** Individuals prescribed home mechanical ventilation (HMV) require careful assessment, ongoing clinical monitoring, extensive education, training, support, titration, and servicing by respiratory therapists and/or qualified, licensed clinicians per state and federal guidelines. HMV may be initiated in the hospital or in the home depending on the patient's underlying medical conditions and acuity. Medicare classifies these devices as requiring "frequent and substantial servicing", acknowledging the critical service component of ventilators to avoid risk to the beneficiary's health.

HME providers play a central role in the care continuum, providing services that enable people to remain in a home-based setting while managing their medical needs. By serving these medically complex, high-acuity individuals, HME providers can help: lessen length of facility stay, reduce readmissions, avoid preventable negative health outcomes, support hospital-at-home models, and improve quality of life.

The high touch nature of ventilators, coupled with the numerous supplies and accessories required for the device to work properly for the end user, contribute a significant portion of the overall cost of providing ventilator therapy to end users beyond the cost of the device itself. As such, it is imperative that all of these costs are factored in when determining reimbursement in order to ensure continued access to this life sustaining technology.

### Assessments

- Assessing patient response, utilization, and appropriateness of the therapy/settings
- Inpatient clinical assessment includes determining the appropriateness of the patient to go home
- Bedside clinical assessment at home
- Home evaluation and safety assessment
- Monitoring for symptoms of infection
- Interface and supplies assessment, including mask fitting and potential trach size recommendations
- Performance testing & monitoring as ordered (i.e. CO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub> saturation, etc)
- Trial of the home ventilator in the facility with the caregiver

### Education

- Patient/caregiver training on equipment and supplies provided, infection prevention, and circuit changes needed
- Initial competency assessment
- Ongoing competency retention assessment as needed
- Disease/symptom education as needed
- Training of hospital/facility staff on the home ventilator
- Training of the home health nursing staff on the home ventilator

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**Coordination with Clinical/Hospital Teams and/or Treating Physician**

- Internal discharge review and approval
- Participation in care conferences/discharge meetings, as appropriate
- Day of discharge coordination and presence
- Nursing agency coordination and training
- If required, deliver loaner to hospital for training and trial

**Home-Based Services – Communication/Care with Patient, Family, and/or Physician**

- Physician communication and care plan/outcomes updates
  - Inform prescribing physician when set-up is initiated
  - Provide details of:
    - The people who are educated
    - All clinical details including the ventilator, modem access, setting and mask(s), and patient tolerance
- RT visit the day of discharge or set up
- Routine in home and/or virtual follow up service/clinical visits as determined by the care plan
- 24/7 clinical support and troubleshooting
- Ongoing ventilator management
- Weaning trials

**Equipment Services**

- Dispense equipment during home set up
- Equipment exchanges as needed
- Equipment preventative maintenance and function testing as required by manufacturer
- Resupplies ordering

**Coordination of Related Products**

- Provide other products/services as appropriate when prescribed by the physician
- Maintain all services

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