

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Access to Ostomy Products and Services in Home-Based Environment Achieves Health Care Triple Aim**

Washington D.C. – Stakeholders representing health care providers and end users with medical needs developed a white paper to educate payers and state Medicaid programs on the types of products and services needed to successfully manage an individual's bowel and bladder needs in a home-based setting to achieve the Triple Aim of improving patient experience and health outcomes while reducing overall cost.

An estimated 725,000-1,000,000 individuals in the United States are currently living with an ostomy. Each body and ostomy type is unique, and a customized approach is required in order to determine the combination of products and brands that best meet a person's clinical and personal needs. Home medical equipment (HME) providers work closely with the clinical community and end users to deliver appropriate supplies and provide education and services to people living with an ostomy in a cost-effective, homecare setting. However, continued reductions to reimbursements for ostomy supplies jeopardize access to ostomy supplies and services and increase the risk of adverse health outcomes, which increase costs to the payer and/or health system.

"When a person living with a permanent or temporary ostomy does not have access to their prescribed ostomy supplies, the consequences can be severe. Inflamed skin, pouch leaks, and emotional stress are just a few of the outcomes that can have devastating effects on a person's quality of life," explains James Murray, President of United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. (UOAA).

"Although it is understandable that state Medicaid, as well as federal Medicare spending programs, are under extreme pressure to control costs while still providing quality outcomes, investments in quality ostomy products are crucial and will ultimately assist in controlling these costs and improving patient outcomes. It is imperative that we continue to educate and advocate on behalf of patients requiring necessary life-saving products and services," explains Kate Lawrence, MSN, RN, CWOCN, Public Policy and Advocacy Coordinator for the Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society™ (WOCN®).

The white paper, developed by the American Association for Homecare, United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc., United Spinal Association, Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society™ (WOCN®), and Wound Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board, addresses the variables going into managing each person's ostomy needs, the role of the HME provider, the risks of improper management, and the value of managing ostomy with sustainable reimbursement.

"It is critical that payers understand the distinct needs of this population and what is required to safely and effectively manage their medical conditions," affirmed Laura Williard, Vice President of Payer Relations at the American Association for Homecare. "By providing sustainable reimbursement, the HME community will have the resources to maximize outcomes while ensuring cost-effective payer management."

The paper requests that payers ensure rates for ostomy products and services are no less than the current corresponding 2021 Medicare fee for service rates for these products. Partnering organizations will use this resource in outreach and education to payers, state programs, and legislators to preserve access to ostomy supplies and services.

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**About:**

*American Association for Homecare* is a 501(c)6 national nonprofit association leading advocacy efforts on behalf of home medical equipment (HME) providers, manufacturers, and other stakeholders working to protect access to high quality medical products and home-based care for millions of Americans.

*United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. (UOAA)* is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit organization that supports, empowers, and advocates for people who have had or who will have ostomy or continent diversion surgery.

*United Spinal Association* is a 501(c)3 national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to empowering people with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D), including veterans, to live successful and fulfilling lives.

*Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society™ (WOCN®)* is the largest and most recognized professional nursing community dedicated to advancing the practice and delivery of expert healthcare to individuals with wound, ostomy, and continence care needs.

*Wound Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board* is a professional organization dedicated to providing consumer safety and protection by offering credentialing in the areas of wound, ostomy, continence, and foot care nursing to registered nurses.