

Competitive Bidding on Ostomy and Urological Supplies Threatens Patient Safety and Increases Costs.

In 2025, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) added urological and ostomy supplies to its competitive bidding program, which awards contracts to suppliers offering the lowest bids. This ruling is intended to save Medicare money — but if **patients lose access to medically prescribed, individualized, high-quality prosthetics, those savings will be threatened by increasing costs from rising infection rates, hospitalizations, and the onset of serious health complications.**

Urological and ostomy supplies are customized prosthetics.

Millions of Americans rely on urological and ostomy supplies to live independently, hold jobs, and avoid more serious medical care. This includes patients who live with spina bifida, spinal cord injuries, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease and colitis, and other medical issues.

These supplies are designed for each patient's unique anatomy, condition, needs, and lifestyle. Because patients' needs vary so widely, there are thousands of continence and ostomy products on the market.

Ill-fitting products will increase costs and threaten patient safety.

Ill-fitting catheters and ostomy products increase the risk of urinary tract infections, leakage, renal failure, and other serious complications that lead to emergency room visits.

According to the CDC, catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs) are one of the most common infections and are associated with increased morbidity, mortality, health care costs, and length of stay.¹

A single hospitalization for a catheter-related infection can cost Medicare far more than a year's supply of properly fitting catheters.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/uti/about/cauti-basics.html>

Congress excluded ostomy and urological supplies from competitive bidding for a reason.

When Congress authorized the competitive bidding process in the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act, it deliberately excluded prosthetics like catheters and ostomy supplies due to their complexity and potential for patient risk. More than 20 years later, CMS is reversing this — despite having no new safety data.

Patients need the right fit — not the lowest bid.

We need CMS to conduct a five-year study to assess the patient safety risks and costs associated with including ostomy and urological supplies in competitive bidding.

Visit HighCostofLowBids.org to learn more.