

Eli's Rehab Report

NEWS BRIEFS: Power Mobility Coalition Sticks Up for Wheelchair Suppliers

Wheelchair suppliers take exception to the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) August report that put suppliers on the spot -- so says the Power Mobility Coalition. The OIG claimed Medicare and its beneficiaries paid up to four times more than the average amount paid by suppliers for wheelchairs.

The report used "flawed methodology and incomplete data" to draw conclusions, according to **Eric Sokol**, director of the Power Mobility Coalition (PMC), a national association of motorized wheelchair and power-operated vehicle suppliers and manufacturers.

And these "inaccuracies" the OIG published could affect more than just suppliers' reputations. "If readers incorrectly draw conclusions that low acquisition costs equates to high profit margins, then the PMC questions the completeness of the study and its usefulness to policymakers," Sokol continued.

The OIG didn't calculate costs of the services provided, as well as overhead expenses such as salaries, fuel, transportation, rents, beneficiary assistance in billing Medicare, and other defining factors. Also, "increased Medicare standards and documentation confusion" like the accreditation and surety process has "raised the cost to providers of partnering with the Medicare program," according to Sokol.