

April 5, 2011

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Congressmen Jason Altmire (PA-04) and Glenn “G.T.” Thompson (PA-05) today welcomed the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services’ (CMS) decision to delay the originally scheduled start date for round two of its competitive bidding program for durable medical equipment for six months, until the summer of 2013. Citing concerns that the competitive bidding program would push small businesses out of the marketplace and diminish seniors’ quality of care, Congressmen Altmire and Thompson introduced the Fairness in Medicare Bidding Act (H.R. 1041) in March of this year. This legislation would fully repeal the competitive bidding program at no cost to taxpayers. More than 60 Members of Congress have cosponsored H.R. 1041 during the last month.

“CMS’s decision to delay round two of the competitive bidding program shows that even it acknowledges that this program is seriously flawed,” Congressman Altmire said. “The truth is that no matter how CMS tries to tweak its competitive bidding program, it will continue to be a fundamentally bad deal for our nation’s seniors and small businesses. I will continue working in Congress to repeal this program and protect seniors’ access to the quality care that they deserve.”

“Auction and bidding experts have resoundingly agreed that the program does not work,” Congressman Thompson said. “Delaying round two only kicks the can to a future date. While this is an indication that the Fairness in Medicare Bidding Act (H.R. 1041) is gaining momentum, we must continue efforts to educate policy makers here in Washington about the disastrous affects this program will have on our communities and Medicare beneficiaries.”

CMS’s competitive bidding program has already gone into effect in nine metropolitan statistical areas, including the Pittsburgh region. In round two, the program is set to be implemented in 91 areas nationwide.