

1 **Procedure for Purchasing Medical Assistive Devices**  
2 **Discussion Paper**

3 **Background**

4 Bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP) and continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)  
5 devices are provided to eligible Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers if the devices are  
6 needed to stabilize, reduce, or remove an impediment to employment. Although both machines  
7 are most commonly used for sleep apnea, BiPAP is used also to help individuals who need extra  
8 respiratory support, such as individuals who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. A  
9 BiPAP machine is often prescribed for patients with congestive heart failure and/or coronary  
10 artery disease and pulmonary or neurologic medical disorders. Patients with neuromuscular  
11 disorders may benefit from the pressure differential of a BiPAP device.

12 Physical restoration is a VR service that is available to eligible VR customers. Physical  
13 restoration services decrease, help manage, and/or stabilize physical and mental barriers so that  
14 eligible customers can secure, keep, advance in, or return to competitive integrated employment.  
15 As defined in 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §361.5(39), physical and mental restoration  
16 services include corrective surgery, therapeutic treatment, dentistry, various types of therapy, and  
17 other medical or medically related rehabilitation services. The definition also includes nursing  
18 services, drugs, prosthetic and orthotic devices, and eyeglasses and lenses, as well as associated  
19 visual examination services and training. As for corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment, CFR  
20 states that the physical and mental restoration services include “corrective surgery or therapeutic  
21 treatment that is likely, within a reasonable period of time, to correct or modify substantially a  
22 stable or slowly progressive physical or mental impairment that constitutes a substantial  
23 impediment to employment.”

24 **Issues**

25 The VR Division’s (VRD) review of purchases of BiPAP and CPAP equipment for VR  
26 customers revealed inconsistency that can be remedied through minor revision to the Vocational  
27 Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) policy and procedure for durable medical equipment  
28 (DME). This revision will ensure clarity and consistency in the purchase of these devices for VR  
29 customers. In addition, VRD identified that vendors often encourage renting rather than  
30 purchase of devices, which is less cost effective. A revision to the VR Standards for Providers  
31 (SFP) manual to specifically include BiPAP and CPAP devices in DME contracts will ensure  
32 best value purchasing.  
33

34 **Decision Points**

35 Staff seeks direction on the following revisions to the VRSM and SFP to provide additional  
36 guidance to VR staff and vendors and to standardize the purchase of BiPAP and CPAP devices:

- 37 • Adding BiPAP and CPAP devices to the current DME contracts  
38 • Purchasing BiPAP and CPAP devices through the contract rate of 18 percent less than the  
39 manufacturer’s suggested retail price

40 **Rehabilitation Council of Texas Recommendations**

41 The Rehabilitation Council of Texas recommended that a counselor receive additional guidelines  
42 to evaluate DME recommendations. VRD explained that all DME recommendations are

1 reviewed by the Assistive Technology Specialist (ATS) who is a trained staff member and that  
2 the process is outlined in the VRSM. VR staff will be reminded of this policy and procedure  
3 upon implementation of approved revisions. RCT further recommended that informed choice be  
4 utilized when obtaining specifications for DMEs. VR staff will continue to ensure informed  
5 choice in the VR process but explained that staff can only purchase what is on the prescription  
6 that is provided to VR.