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Homebound Americans who have difficulty traveling to polling places during the 2012 election cycle will have help casting their votes, thanks to a collaborative initiative launched today by state home healthcare associations and other leaders in America's home healthcare community. The Bring the Vote Home initiative aims to engage the nation's 12 million home healthcare patients - including 3.5 million Medicare beneficiaries - via voter and absentee ballot registration initiatives. "We are launching Bring the Vote Home to give patients who would otherwise not have the resources or ability to vote a voice in this year's election. We hope to enlist millions of new voters from the home healthcare community and raise awareness of the issues impacting our patients," said Marcia Tetterton, Chair of the Council for State Home Health Associations, which represents 37 state home health agency associations from across the country. "Because many of our senior patients are completely homebound, they often face difficulties exercising their very important right to vote. We hope this initiative will remove obstacles and barriers to voting so they can take part in the 2012 election."

As part of the initiative, the home healthcare community is launching a new website, www.bringthevotehome.org, which offers state-specific information and instructions for voter and absentee ballot registration. Further, home healthcare caregivers will directly assist patients and their families during the registration process and provide information on how to obtain absentee voter materials.

Today approximately 3.5 million Medicare beneficiaries receive clinically advanced, cost-effective care services in the home setting. Many healthcare treatments that were once only offered in a hospital or a physician's office can now be safely, effectively, and efficiently provided in patients' homes by skilled clinicians. Home healthcare is generally less expensive, more convenient, and as effective as care provided in institutional settings.

"American seniors and Medicare beneficiaries have long been an important voting bloc for candidates, and this election cycle will be no different," added Tetterton. "For the millions of Americans who may have been forced to sit out the last election because of issues related to their health and mobility, we're pleased to be able to offer information and options. Everyone who has a stake in healthcare should have a vote."

Bring the Vote Home is a nationwide citizenship project coordinated by the Council for State Home Care Associations, Partnership for Quality Home Healthcare, and other home health community members to help America's approximately 12 million home healthcare patients, including 3.5 Medicare beneficiaries, and 1.1 million skilled healthcare professionals exercise their right to vote in national and state elections this November. To learn more, visit www.bringthevotehome.org.