

Congressman Mike Bost (IL-12)

Chair, House VA Committee

Cannon HOB 352

Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Mark Takano (CA-39)

Ranking Member, House VA Committee

Rayburn HOB 2078

Washington, DC 20515

Statement for the Record on H.R. 1364 from BraunAbility and the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA)

BraunAbility, an American manufacturer of disability-accessible vehicles, and the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA), a non-profit trade association dedicated to improving the mobility industry and enhancing the independence of individuals with disabilities, support Congressman Barrett's bill, H.R. 1364, which would more clearly define what automobile adaptive equipment (AAE) qualifies as "medical services" under 38 USC 1701(6)(I).

BraunAbility was founded in 1972 by the late Ralph Braun, a smalltown American with spinal muscular atrophy who found himself unable to walk by age 15. Undaunted, Ralph became determined to find a way to stay mobile and founded BraunAbility, which continues manufacture various wheelchair accessibility products more than 50 years later. BraunAbility proudly serves America's disabled veterans by manufacturing a range of converted wheelchair-accessible vans and SUVs that help provide these heroes with mobility independence.

Since its founding in 1989, NMEDA has worked to advocate for safe and reliable transportation solutions for individuals with disabilities, including disabled veterans. NMEDA members include mobility equipment manufacturers, dealers, driver rehabilitation specialists, and other industry professionals who collaborate to provide quality adaptive solutions that meet the unique mobility needs of their clients. For over three decades, NMEDA has been dedicated to improving access to safe, reliable mobility products that enhance the independence of those with disabilities, including America's disabled veterans.

BraunAbility and NMEDA strongly support the changes that Congressman Barrett proposes in H.R. 1364. These changes will more clearly codify into statute the full range of AAE that qualifies as medical services, including some modifications that are not currently listed in statute, such as ramps and lowered floors. The addition of these items to the list of approved medical services will provide the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with clarity and consistency, allowing it to more effectively provide America's disabled veterans with the automobility care they need.

Moreover, BraunAbility and NMEDA support the inclusion in H.R. 1364 of the phrase "the provision of any medically necessary automobile adaptations," which helps clarify that the list provided at 38 USC 1701(6)(I) is not necessarily exhaustive. This change in language will allow VA to continue to cover medically necessary AAE as technology advances and new products become available. By codifying this inclusive language, Congress will ensure high-quality automobility care for America's disabled veterans.

BraunAbility and NMEDA support two minor changes to H.R. 1364, which we believe will more comprehensively cover automobile adaptive equipment. First, we propose a minor modification to item (v) under the change in Section 2. Our proposed change would read "(v) occupied and unoccupied mobility lifts." This clarification captures all BraunAbility mobility device lifts (under

"occupied") as well as all other potentially unoccupied mobility device lifts. Second, we propose adding an item (ix) to the changes in Section 2 that would read, "(ix) adapted seating." Adding adapted seating would capture transfer seat bases and turning/swiveling seats that are often used in adapted vehicles, but which are not explicitly identified under the current language. Find below a complete redline for Section 2 of H.R. 1364 that incorporates these changes.

BraunAbility is deeply integrated in the community of disabled veterans and thoroughly understands the challenges of providing high-quality AAE. NMEDA has long been a trusted resource in the mobility industry, supporting veterans and their families in accessing essential adaptive equipment solutions. We support H.R. 1364 because it will clarify and codify the range of adaptive equipment that VA is required to provide, benefiting America's disabled veterans.

Proposed Redline to H.R. 1364, Section 2

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION REGARDING INCLUSION OF MEDICALLY NECESSARY AUTOMOBILE ADAPTATIONS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DEFINITION OF "MEDICAL SERVICES".

Section 1701(6)(I) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(I) The provision of any medically necessary 8 automobile adaptations, including—
 “(i) ramp and kneeling systems;
 “(ii) raised doors or lowered floors;
 “(iii) raised roofs;
 “(iv) air conditioning;
 “(v) *occupied and unoccupied* mobility device lifts;
 “(vi) non-articulating trailers;
 “(vii) ingress or egress accessibility modifications;
 “(viii) wheelchair tiedowns; *and*
 “(ix) *adapted seating*.”.

Sincerely,

Justin Riendeau
Associate Director of Product Safety & Compliance
BraunAbility



Shawn Richmond
Government Relations and Public Policy
National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association

