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New contract period has pros and cons, say providers

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by: [Tracy Orzel](#) - Friday, August 28, 2015

YARMOUTH, Maine – HME providers are on the fence over whether the short contract period for Round 1 2017 is a draw or a deterrent

"If you didn't get a contract, you know you could rebid in two years instead of three," said De McMenam, owner of Pro-Serv Medical in Pittsburgh. "If you did get a contract, then you have to go through the whole thing again—one year sooner—which is stressful."

Stakeholders speculate that CMS made the switch from a three-year to a two-year contract so that Rounds 1 and 2 would both end on Dec. 31, 2018, paving the way for a national bid program starting in 2019.

However, some providers, like Tammy Zelenko, say the prospect of spending months to develop and submit bids, and getting only a two-year contract isn't very enticing.

"I think it's a bad thing," said Zelenko, CEO of Advacare Home Services in Pittsburgh. "There's a lot of time invested in trying to get a contract. There's not an incentive to go after a two-year contract with Medicare based on the reimbursement rates, the stringent requirements and the audit."

Others, like provider Maurie Lecker, say the length of the contract is inconsequential—a bad deal is a bad deal.

"It doesn't matter whether it's two years or three years," said Lecker, co-owner of Medical Homecare Supply in West Palm Beach, Fla. "With the prices being what they are, how can you make any money?"

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