2026 Outlook For The U.S. DME Market

Description

By James Schulze

This article discusses the anticipated growth in the DME market in 2026 and beyond, as well as the factors that are fueling this opportunity. It also highlights how the CMSâ?? new final rule will impact DME providers and how they can adapt their marketing efforts to grow in this environment.

The outlook for the U.S. Durable Medical Equipment (â??DMEâ?•) market looks quite positive for 2026 and beyond. According to recent reports, the U.S. DME market is anticipated grow at a CAGR of **5.0%** to **5.6%** for the next five to eight years. At the end of 2024, analysts valued the market at about $62-68 million, depending on the report. That means it will likely be a $90+ million market by the early 2030s. So, what is driving this strong, steady growth in the DME market and will it be enough to support the future forecast?

Growth factors for the DME market

There are a few factors that have driven and will continue to drive growth in the DME market:

- **Aging population** â?? Seniors comprise the largest segment in the DME target audience. It makes sense given the list of devices that qualify as DME, including mobility devices (e.g., wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, crutches, door openers), medical furniture (e.g., hospital beds, mattresses, stretchers, lift chairs), bathroom safety devices (e.g., commodes, toilet rails/frames), and monitoring and therapeutic devices (e.g., blood glucose monitors, oxygen equipment, vital sign monitors, infusion pumps). Today, there are approximately **60 million** Americans aged 65 or older. Aging Baby Boomers have certainly given the senior population a boost, but so has increased life expectancy. By all accounts, the U.S. senior population is expected to continue growing for the next few decades, with one estimate suggesting there will be about **82 million** seniors by 2050.

- **Growing prevalence of chronic diseases** â?? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (â??CDCâ?•) estimates that 129 million (60%) adults in the U.S. suffer from at least one major chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Nearly 40% of adults are managing multiple conditions. And, the number of incidences of chronic diseases is expected to nearly double over the next two decades. Higher rates of diabetes, COPD, and heart disease create a continued need for monitoring and therapeutic DME devices.
- **Improved technology** â?? Advancements such as IoMT-enabled (Internet of Medical Things) devices, smart monitoring, and AI-supported products have dramatically increased the functionality of DME. Today, these technologies are being used to capture and transmit real-time patient data to care teams, allowing for timely adjustments in treatment plans when needed. They have improved patient care and streamlined healthcare delivery, making more patients open to using DME.
- **Preference for home healthcare** â?? The U.S. home care industry is estimated to be over $100 billion today, growing to more than $170 billion in the next seven years. Most of the patients using home healthcare are seniors. Studies have shown that approximately 90% of seniors would rather receive assistance in their home than obtain institutional care, a trend that is likely to continue to boost the use of DME devices.

All of these trends suggest continued growth in the industry, but to capture this opportunity, DME providers will need to be compliant with new CMS rules.

New CMS DME rules for 2026

Late last month, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (â??CMSâ?•) finalized and issued its 2026 Home Health Rule, which will become effective January 1, 2026. This final rule will impact providers of Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (â??DMEPOSâ?•). It aims to decrease fraud and abuse. While providers will want to review the complete final rule, these are some of the key takeaways for DME providers:

- **Annual provider accreditation** â?? CMS will now require DME providers to complete *annual* accreditation surveys rather than the current practice of every three years. This will increase the providersâ?? compliance obligations and operational costs, so they will need to budget appropriately to cover these new demands.
- **Elimination of temporary accreditation** â?? In the past, DME providersâ?? new locations could operate under temporary accreditation while they awaited an on-site survey. This new final rule eliminates temporary accreditation. DME providers who are looking to add a new location will now need to go through compliance and surveying efforts *before* they can open a new location.
- **Re-accreditation and re-enrollment when majority ownership changes** â?? The final rule creates a â??36-Month Rule.â?• If a DME provider has a change in majority ownership of their business within 36 months of their initial enrollment or last majority change, they will be required to enroll as a new DMEPOS supplier. They will also need to go through a full survey accreditation process again. If DME providers are considering ownership changes (e.g., mergers, transfers) in a short time frame, they will need to be prepared for the increased costs and time demands of getting re-accredited and re-enrolled.
- **Stricter oversight of accrediting organizations** â?? The final rule also puts some quality checks on accrediting organizations (AOs), those who are responsible for surveying and reaccrediting DME providers. AOs will be required to describe in detail their key processes (e.g.,

identifying and correcting any deficiencies in their own programs, assessing supplier deficiencies, identifying fraudulent activity, etc.) and will need to meet increased data requirements. The final rule also gives the CMS the authority to more quickly remove an AO if they perform poorly, reducing the potential for conflicts of interest and driving greater accountability. Given this heightened oversight, AOs will likely make some changes in how they operate. DME providers should be prepared for more rigorous audits and an intense focus on transparency. The silver lining for DME providers is that they, too, will have more transparency into how they will be assessed and what changes they can make to ensure accreditation.

- **Continued, unannounced surveys** â?? The final rule confirms that DMEPOS surveys must remain unannounced in the future. That means DME providers will need to ensure they maintain compliance throughout the year rather than just preparing for a scheduled survey.
- **Prior authorization exemptions** â?? The final rule also puts more detail around the criteria for prior authorization exemptions. DME providers who have a 90%+ claim approval rate may be exempt from prior authorization requirements. Their continued eligibility for this exemption will require ongoing medical review sampling. This is good news for high-performing DME providers, as they could reduce their administrative demands and costs on prior authorizations.

With these rule changes, operational excellence and compliance will be more important than ever. DME providers with strong systems and proactive claims validation processes will be far ahead in pursuing the DME growth opportunity. But, what can DME providers also do in their marketing efforts to capture a greater share of the DME market?

Marketing strategies for pursuing the DME opportunity

There are a number of marketing actions DME providers can take to grow their DME sales in this environment, including:

- **Consider buying real-time leads** â?? The essential first step to growing sales is identifying consumers who need DME devices now. While some DME providers will have in-house systems for generating leads, many struggle to generate the volume of leads they need to support their growth objectives. Others simply wish to outsource the process. Whether you want to outsource or augment your existing leads, buying real-time leads is an effective, compliant solution. Real-time leads represent consumers who have already expressed a need for DME *now* and have opted in to connect with a DME provider. They are high-intent, competitively-priced leads that allow you to focus more of your resources on converting prospects to clients.
- **Tweak your messaging to fit your target audience** â?? Once you know who you want to pursue, getting your messaging right is the next step. Messaging that stresses your compliance efforts and accreditation status will help you build trust with seniors. Your messaging should also clearly convey patient-centric value. For example, with most seniors preferring home care to institutional care, messaging that focuses on simplified home care, improved quality of life, and comfort will resonate with seniors and their care teams.
- **Leverage technology advancements in your marketing** â?? While some seniors have been a little reluctant to embrace advanced technologies, the new technologies available for DME allow them to work better with their care team, improve their health, quickly make needed changes in their treatment protocols, lessen their pain, and make everyday life easier. DME providers should showcase their technology-enabled solutions, linking them to important patient benefits.

- **Use digital marketing to educate consumers and healthcare providers** â?? There have been several changes in the industry, especially with the recent final ruling from CMS. This is an opportunity for marketing-savvy DME providers to educate both end users and healthcare providers on regulatory changes as well as new products and technologies. Beyond tailoring your scripts to be educational, consider changes in your content marketing, offering webinars, tip guides, blogs, newsletters and more to establish credibility with your target audience.

Conclusion

The U.S. DME market is on a growth trajectory, which will continue into 2026 and beyond. This growth is driven by an increasing senior population, prevalence of chronic diseases, and trends in healthcare delivery. Regulatory changes related to DME provider accreditation and enrollment will require providers to adapt their operational processes. The DME providers that combine strong compliance with value-focused marketing will be well positioned to capture growth opportunities in 2026. Are you ready to grow your business in this environment?If you would like more information on how you can sell more durable medical equipment in the future, give The Leads Warehouse a call at **1-800-884-8371** or visit our website at https://theleadswarehouse.com.

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