

Setting the Ethical Standard

by **Russ Bodoff**

NHIA President

This issue of *INFUSION* highlights a new ethics code that has been developed by, and for, NHIA members. The code will be launched in 2011 and become a part of each member's commitment to NHIA membership in 2012. Merriam-Webster defines ethics as "a set of moral principles" or "the discipline of dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation." In the *American Heritage Dictionary*, ethics is described as the "rules or standards governing the conduct of the members of a profession." I am sure you will agree that most people understand the meaning of ethics and believe in the importance of practicing ethical behavior. Or do they?



You can't look at a headline these days without reading an article about a scandal somewhere in America. I must admit, I look at the world we live in, and I do question if people *really* understand what ethical practice is truly all about. We have politicians continually making wildly exaggerated claims against opponents or who have been convicted of crimes or illicit activities and continue to run for political office on ethical and moral platforms. I see both print and broadcast media profiting by the abundance of the many nasty political ads that they run.

We are all aware of the excesses of the mortgage and financial communities that have deepened our economic recession. The lack of responsibility that led to this summer's massive oil spill in the Gulf, the extent of steroid use among sports heroes and the ongoing stories of celebrities' use of drugs, infidelities, and other unethical behaviors is disheartening. On the world stage we see organizations like the United Nations giving platforms to the worst dictators and hate mongers to spread their distorted thoughts to rounds of applause. I wonder at times if we have lost the ethical compass.

On the other side of the spectrum I look at home infusion providers. There is a reason that pharmacists and nurses top the list of most respected professions. When professionals put the care and well being of the patients they are responsible for as their highest priority it is recognized and it is appreciated. This is a trust that we must maintain every day.

We all know the media and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) like to highlight the scams in the health care field and have on many occasions used infusion treatments as an example. Those examples reflect out and out scam operators that have no connection at all to the legitimate home infusion providers that make up the NHIA membership. CMS needs to shut them down and we are always willing to help the regulatory and enforcement agencies chase the bad operators.

The media, however, never differentiates between the good and bad guys so we have to make sure we do. That is why we have developed an ethics code. That is why we believe that every single NHIA member will be able to comply with the code. That is why in 2012 we will see the NHIA members all validating what they do every day; operate with the highest level of ethical practice and with the highest regard for the quality of patient care.

I thank each of you for the valuable work that you do every day. In a world where ethics seems to take a back seat to self interest, I am proud to lead an organization where ethical practice and quality patient care is the highest priority.

Regards

