

## Fulfilling Our Responsibility— Acting Today To Succeed Tomorrow...

by **Russ Bodoff**  
NHIA President

Our field is full of entrepreneurial success stories—people with a vision and a passion for providing home infusion therapy to patients who would otherwise have remained institutionalized; people who fought for recognition of this industry by payers and regulatory agencies. We've come a long way since NHIA was formed 19 years ago, and as we look to our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, you may be asking yourself “aren't we there yet?” The answer is, and always will be, no, as the future is ever evolving.

Yes, whether we like it or not, health care reform and major reimbursement changes will force us to be even more nimble, strategic, and capable of responding to emerging changes and new demands placed upon us. Frankly, if we do not vigorously embrace our responsibility to actively forge a productive future for our field, we will lose the very thing we've fought so long to achieve—recognition of the value and essential purpose of our industry.

As your NHIA Team and Board of Directors hear more each day about the unfolding, dramatic health care system changes taking place (changes accelerated by the recent passage of health care reform legislation), I have developed a concern about the level of complacency that exists within the field. **This is the worst of times to be complacent.** While it is impossible today to understand all the implications of such changes, it is safe to say that our businesses will certainly be impacted. Yet as the warning flags clearly wave in front of us, it seems many home infusion companies have become less engaged in taking the vigilant action steps needed to protect and advance our field—and, in turn, are endangering their own businesses. We will not achieve ultimate success as a field with only a high level of activity from just a small number of stakeholders. Rather, a high level of activity is needed from a large number of stakeholders...and we need it now!



**How Can You Help? Identify and share patient stories, and contribute your data—it really is that straightforward.**

Although members of Congress and their staff generally accept the premise that home infusion therapy represents quality care with costs savings, they are increasingly asking for data about the size and scope of our field, and for examples of patients who have been hurt by the lack of Medicare reimbursement. In fact, it's a growing challenge for Congressional Representatives—and the press—to believe that patients and their families are truly suffering at all by the lack of meaningful home infusion coverage under Medicare, without ongoing stories that demonstrate this reality. Yet, despite our repeated requests for patient stories, I am shocked and disappointed to say that in 2010 we have not received one “useable” story from our members. I am also concerned about the number of companies that have participated in our Phase I Provider Survey (see page 18). Consider the following:

- Just about a third of NHIA members have participated in the data study—which, on the one hand is huge success, representing greater data sharing than ever before, but that still means two thirds have not participated, amid the most critical needs for aggregate data we have ever had as a field.
- With no useable patient stories, we're losing our impact with members of Congress.
- Equally troubling, and possibly more damaging, is our inability to obtain media attention for the Medicare challenge, as no national media will ever be interested in reporting on our issues without connecting real-life examples.

Abraham Lincoln once said, “You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” We all have a responsibility to our businesses, to our bottom lines, to our employees, to our field and, ultimately, to the patients in need of quality home infusion therapy—a responsibility to face change head-on, and to try our best to create a positive future for our industry. Thus far, vital but all-too-small numbers of stakeholders are aggressively taking action. I applaud them, and ask for their continued vigilance. But at the same time, I implore others to also step up, get engaged and embrace our collective responsibility to take the necessary actions today, so as to generate a thriving tomorrow.

Please, if you have not yet done so, track down and share with NHIA these much needed patient stories—and participate in the NHIA Phase I Data Survey. And if there is anything that I can do to answer your questions about the urgent need for such actions, I stand ready to dialogue with you. Call or e-mail me. **There is way too much at stake for us all not to do more.**

*Russ*