

Taking Our Patient-Centered Passion A Critical Step Further

by **Russ Bodoff**
NHIA President

This issue of *INFUSION* focuses on various key aspects of the alternate-site infusion workforce—from the need to ensure employee safety, to providing the best clinical guidelines for staff, to attracting, retaining and leveraging high-performing team members. Matters such as these are so critical to pay close attention to and address, as the staff working at NHIA member companies are the heart and soul of what makes home infusion providers such great companies. Your employees are the “engine” that drives success at every organizational level.

Each time that I have an opportunity to visit an NHIA member company, I come away impressed and excited about the passion that the employees show for their patients, as well as their commitment to the best care possible—so I well know that I do not have to “sell” any of you on patient-centered commitment or passion. But, amid the current opportunities and massive health care reform changes emanating out of Washington, I am now going to ask you to take that passion for your patients a significant step further.

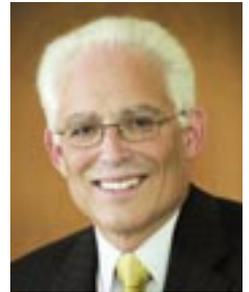
The 2010 GAO study of home infusion (where, for the first time, the government *itself* validated that home infusion therapy represents quality, cost-effective care), the high degree of interest by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) in a home infusion demonstration project, and the recent reintroduction of the *Medicare Home Infusion Therapy Coverage Act* are all converging to generate the opportunity to finally make meaningful progress in obtaining the much-needed Medicare coverage fix—but success will only be attained if we can amass ample grassroots support to drive these opportunities forward. Yes, it is essential that you and your team members step forward and apply the same, earlier mentioned, passion and commitment to our grassroots endeavor. You and your team *must* be the active “grassroots workforce” that serves as the engine driving our advocacy success.

There are three primary action steps presently needed from you and as many alternate-site infusion professionals as possible:

1. It is imperative that every employee, in every NHIA member company, click on the “**Action Alert**” button on the NHIA website homepage (or go to: www.nhia.org/actionalert) and send letters to their members of Congress asking for support and co-sponsorship of the *Medicare Home Infusion Therapy Coverage Act of 2011*. This takes just about three to five minutes to do—and instead of Congressional offices counting constituent concerns in the hundreds they will be counting them in the thousands. *Clearly, our patients are worth five minutes.*
2. For those of you in the position to help, we greatly need patient stories about Medicare beneficiaries unable to receive home infusion services due to the lack of a meaningful benefit. While I know, without such a benefit, your company probably does not provide services to these patients and therefore are difficult to identify, we desperately need them. I am urgently asking that you evaluate intake records for evidence of patients that could not be serviced—and also reach out to referral sources to seek their assistance in identifying these patients. If we want our opportunities for legislative success to increase, we must put “real human faces” on the grave challenges faced by Medicare patients in order to escalate the pressure on members of Congress to act. There is a simple formula that works in Washington: *patient stories drive media coverage and media coverage impacts members of Congress.*
2. There is a third action step that will also immensely help this cause. In your own community, please reach out to the local AARP chapter, patient and disease advocacy groups, and religious or social organizations that you may belong to and request two things:
 - First, ask such organizations to also utilize our above mentioned “Action Alert” click through to send letters to their members of Congress asking for support of the *Medicare Home Infusion Therapy Coverage Act of 2011*.
 - Second, ask if they would be willing to lend their names to a list of organizations around the country supporting our legislation.

I know that most of you are not able to come to Washington to help drive legislative success—but the actions outlined above allow you to be extremely valuable members of our grassroots advocacy team, right in your own backyard. I urge you to get involved—and to keep us abreast of your advocacy efforts along the way. Please **contact John Magnuson, NHIA’s Vice President of Legislative Affairs**, to let us know about the grassroots actions you do take—or to get his input on how to best implement some of the above advocacy activities (he can be reached at 703-838-2664 or john.magnuson@nhia.org).

Success is always a team effort—and the NHIA members must be the passionate engine driving our advocacy success, so we can together make this much-needed Medicare benefit a reality.



Russ