

Make Your Voice—And Then Your Vote—Count!

by **Russ Bodoff**

NHIA President & Chief Executive Officer

2012 will be the “year of elections”—not only will we have a presidential election, but every member of the House and one third of the members of the Senate are up for re-election. I wish I could believe that with so many candidates involved in campaigns we will hear true and honest debates on the issues facing our country, as well as realistic discussions about our nation’s many health care challenges and the pressures being placed on providers. However, given the deeply partisan environment of the last several years, I have little confidence that will happen. Instead, we will likely be inundated with personal attacks on opposing candidates, along with accusations about how one political party or the other is destroying the country. Furthermore, the media is also apt to look forward to the 2012 elections with wide-eyed eagerness—seeing hundreds of millions of dollars to be spent on political advertising. After all, why discuss crucial issues when personal attack ads have become the norm?



Given the above described unfortunate political landscape, it is still very worthwhile to proactively consider “what does this mean to all of us in the home infusion field”—and how can we leverage these dynamics in productive ways? First of all, members of Congress in both parties will be nervous. With national studies showing 90% of the population with negative views of Congress, constituents are becoming more important than ever. Additionally, your Representatives—and their challengers—know that elections will be tight and that each vote is very important. This will translate into a greater openness to listen to constituents, as candidates will become more accessible spending lots of time back in the districts and states reaching out to voters. **We must capitalize on such election year dynamics.**

NHIA is located in Virginia and most of the staff live in Virginia. We are making a point to ensure that our appropriate House members and Senators hear from us as individual constituents, as well as an employer creating jobs. We need each of you to do the same at your organization with your representatives. **This is our time to be heard—this is the time to ask some very poignant questions, such as:**

- Why are the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seemingly ignoring the recommendation that came out of the report of the 2010 General Accountability Office (GAO) report on home infusion, after Congress had requested the study? Don’t members of Congress expect such accountability?
- Why is the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) not presently pursuing its initial strong interest in conducting a home infusion demonstration?
- Why are policymakers disregarding the important potential savings opportunity that meaningful coverage of home infusion could generate for Medicare Part A?
- If private payers have been finding savings using home infusion for the past 20-plus years, why can’t Medicare Fee-for-Service find similar savings?

We should continue to ask members of Congress to support the Medicare Home Infusion legislation (**S-1203 and H.R. 2195**)—but even more importantly, we must be united and focused on compelling them to conduct outreach to CMS around the above issues, as that type of advocacy could have a more dramatic impact during a year when legislation is clearly not moving through Congress. Please contact John Magnuson, NHIA’s VP of Legislative Affairs, at 703-838-2664 or via john.magnuson@nhia.org to learn more about how to get actively engaged in this much needed grassroots effort—and check out John’s Advocacy-in-Action column on page 10 of this issue of INFUSION for some hands-on advocacy ideas you can utilize.

Remember, the power in our voices is always stronger during an election year. Now is the time to speak up and push aggressively—working together, we will make beneficial change happen.

Regards,

