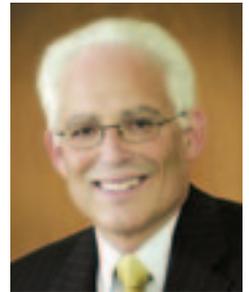


Patient-Centered Home Infusion Care —It's Personal, And That Is How It Should Be!

by **Russ Bodoff**

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This issue of INFUSION magazine addresses a variety of patient-centered dynamics that are at the heart of delivering high-quality, successful home and specialty infusion therapy.

NHIA members care for over a million patients a year—and each patient is a unique individual, requiring a highly specialized care plan designed for his or her distinct situation. As a result, every patient benefits by the sincere desire of each provider to do what is best for their patients. My experience with NHIA members is that the implementation of this person-centered approach goes well beyond “that is how you are supposed to provide care.” In fact, what I have found is that being patient-centered is an authentic calling that NHIA provider and business firm members alike

all have in common. Let me explain a bit more about this observation, via my below column.

Probably the most fun I have as the CEO of NHIA is when I travel to meet NHIA members. With each visit, I hear from the pharmacists, nurses, pharm techs, reimbursement staff, warehouse and delivery personnel, as well the sales and marketing representatives—and all of you consistently reflect a shared, genuine theme: **I want to do my best to do what is best for my patient.** Health care professionals, especially in the home and specialty infusion field, face numerous growing challenges, particularly with so many changes taking place around reimbursement. Yet, even while confronting more difficulties to do their jobs, I see the concern for their patients only increasing. It certainly makes me feel a deep level of personal pride to help represent such a wonderful group of professionals. I can only imagine the dramatic change in perspective it would have if we could get large numbers of staff from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and Congress to visit home infusion pharmacies and see the profound commitment to quality by NHIA members—and to experience the passion and hear the stories in the compelling way that I have had the opportunity to do so. *What a gift I receive from NHIA members when I meet with each of you!*

On a tremendously personal note, the above experiences reinforce the decision I made in early 2007 to leave a different health care organization to accept the position at NHIA as your CEO. Despite not being familiar with NHIA or the membership, I made this decision based upon my own family experience with infusion therapy. Being completely honest, I often do not tell this story as it is still very emotional for me—but to further affirm the vital importance of your person-centered approaches to care, as well as the impact that it has on both patients and caregivers alike, I want to share it now.

A year before the leadership opportunity with NHIA opened up, my first wife, Alyce, passed away from Multiple Myeloma. The cancer was extremely aggressive, and she required many infusion treatments over the 15 months she courageously battled this horrible disease. Some infusions were in an oncology center due to the toxicity of the drugs, and others, when possible, were in the familiar and comforting environment of our home. Helping us to withstand the many dismaying ups and downs of this emotionally and physically depleting situation, it was the immense concern, passion and caring that we received from the infusion nurses, pharmacists and support staff that will always stand out in my memory as being truly sustaining. In many cases, these devoted professionals became friends throughout treatment—and practically like family during the last few days of Alyce's life. Even after her death, many of these caring professionals reached out to me to make sure I was okay. *In each of you, I see that same commitment to the patient—and yes, in all your actions, you continue to confirm for me that I made the right decision to join NHIA.*

So, whenever you get discouraged about the lack of an appropriate Medicare home infusion benefit or frustrated by any of the variety of new challenges developing within the emerging health care reform picture, I urge you to take a step back and be proud of what you do each and every day. Remember that your person-centered, personal approaches to care greatly impact patients' (and their caregivers') lives for the better.

Regards,

