

## Avoiding Resistance to Change is a Good Thing

By **Steve Jurich**

NHIA Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer



In both personal and professional life, sometimes amid our own keen self-awareness, while at other times deep within our unconscious, we are all on a continuous quest for “homeostasis”—that comfortable state of equilibrium. Whether we are preserving good physical health, sustaining a sense of intellectual stability or retaining a capacity for emotional well-being, there are many desirable, beneficial outcomes that result when we are in balance. Yes, we each have a naturally ingrained drive to attain, and then *maintain*, our very cozy and secure “comfort zone.”

The same logic also applies to business entities. Given today’s opportunities, risks and challenges facing the many diverse companies providing infusion and specialty pharmacy products and services to home-based patients, attaining and maintaining a balanced approach to the key aspects of one’s organization—including achieving optimal clinical, financial, human resource and operational performance—is essential to reaching genuine success. Clearly, accomplishing such optimal performance, as well as the success that often comes with it, is not an easy thing for an individual or a company to do. It takes demanding work. It takes perseverance. It takes strategic savvy. And it takes making mistakes—often A LOT of mistakes, followed by thoughtful learning and adjusting from such errors.

As professionals and businesses in the alternate-site infusion field, we focus long and hard on finding the right balance, so that we can achieve a high degree of success—for ourselves, our teams, our organizations and ultimately for the patients we serve. Then, after all of that, when we’ve identified our “alternate-site comfort zones,” we can sit back and enjoy this much-deserved state of equilibrium we’ve worked so hard to reach—right? **Well, it may not be quite so straightforward.**

You see, the funny thing about comfort zones, once we reach them, is that they are fine, enjoyable places to be when that balance is working well relative to the environment in which the company or individual is operating. And the longer it works, the better it feels and the more we are drawn to stay within such comfort zones. But the real trick about attaining a truly productive equilibrium is that it involves way more than arriving at some static point of perceived optimal performance. Real, constructive equilibrium is far from static. It requires a constant thirst for feedback—authentic and unfiltered feedback, so that the person or the business can make ongoing and necessary adjustments to the surrounding environment. In other words, while we might be highly tempted to resist change and stay within what is familiar to us (including things that have worked so well in the past), we actually must *avoid that resistance and proactively embrace the need for change*—a notion that is very relevant to our industry environment today.

The home and specialty infusion therapy community has already achieved so much in the past 25-plus years. And we have formulated some highly familiar and successful comfort zones along the way. It would be both easy and natural to want to stay with what has worked so well, thus far. And yet here is the outrageous thing about maintaining a productive sense of homeostasis in life, and in business—sometimes, to attain exceptionally productive equilibrium and success, we first must be open to change and engage in a period of disequilibrium. While leveraging the strengths that have gotten us this far, we must also avoid relying only on strategies and approaches that have worked in the past to address the new challenges and opportunities now before us.

Let’s look at what is currently before us in our industry—ongoing contentious debate over *The Affordable Care Act* and what it will mean for our field for the long haul; inclusion of infusion pumps into an already alarming Medicare Competitive Bidding Program; uncertainty regarding how the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will apply the recently passed compounding pharmacy law; dramatically increasing reimbursement compression within our industry; and grave challenges related to the lack of a meaningful Medicare home infusion benefit as patients from the Baby Boomer Cohort (individuals who, up to now, have been your private insurance customers for years) will become Medicare beneficiaries at snowballing rates, each year over the next two decades. These challenges unmistakably represent some of the most turbulent regulatory and fiscal realities we’ve ever faced as home and specialty infusion therapy stakeholders. No matter how strong the temptation may be to sit back and rely on previous comfort zones, at the industry, company and individual professional levels, we must avoid relying solely upon the past or on attempting to maintain a rapidly eroding status quo. Rather, we must embrace the notion of change, while collaborating around new and innovative approaches to today’s realities.

**Without question, it is going to take some unavoidable, yet beneficial, disequilibrium, before we reach our new state of constructive balance and optimal performance.**

Best regards,

