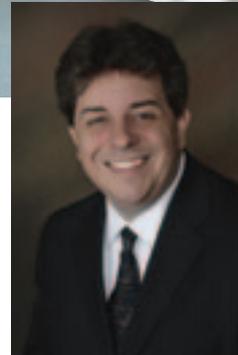


## Anticipation

By Steve Jurich

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Ever hear a song and, for one of a myriad of possible reasons, a part of the melody and/or lyrics evokes a tangible sensation of a vital reality you are actively engaged in—or perhaps it revives a past impactful memory? For me, there are songs throughout my life that do that all the time! Some snippet of music that helps me to associate, *and process*, personal and professional experiences alike, in ways that have meaning, and offer insights. Triumphs, struggles, losses, achievements—sometimes certain measures of music or lines from lyrics act like conduits for evoking our intellectual and emotional senses, sharpening our focus on critical matters we are involved in. Not surprisingly, there's been a song that I've associated with our protracted work on the lack of comprehensive home infusion coverage under Medicare.

Our industry has been striving—really battling—to attain passage of a meaningful Medicare home infusion benefit for over 20 years. When you fight a battle for such a long period of time, *waiting* perpetually for a productive outcome to finally arrive, it is very easy to almost give up or lose your enthusiasm for continuing the struggle. Yes, for far too many years, our Medicare coverage plight seems to have been characterized by the sentiments conveyed in the 1981 Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' song *The Waiting*, where the second refrain in particular contends: “*The waiting is the hardest part. Every day you get one more yard. You take it on faith, you take it to the heart. The waiting is the hardest part.*”

Despite a wide diversity of efforts over the years by NHIA to push the Medicare cause constructively along on Capitol Hill and with the Administration, it has been a LONG wait—where every yard of progress forward has been at a laborious, meandering pace. It has felt like I am hearing that Tom Petty refrain on my mini-van radio, driving on a long road trip, with my three kids screaming in unison, “*Are we there yet?*” Like so many things in life, *the waiting has been the hardest part* of working to resolve our Medicare reimbursement issues.

But *wait*—given the fruitful work that NHIA has been doing over the last year and a half with Avalere Health, LLC to produce a research study that demonstrates home infusion would not be an additional cost to the Medicare program (see p. 16 for more on this project), I am hearing a different song these days—one of *anticipation*! No doubt we still have significant hurdles before us, but I am now finding myself looking forward with a renewed level of expectation about the possibility of finally seeing Congress correct the home infusion Medicare coverage flaw.

In Carly Simon's 1971 song entitled *Anticipation*, she observes “*We can never know about the days to come, but we think about them anyway.*” Her impassioned voice then beckons in her yearning refrain, “*Anticipation, anticipation is making me late, is keeping me waiting.*” It is that notion of the need to wait—and the reality that we may even be late—being sustained by the excitement that comes with anticipating a favorable future that best describes how I am now seeing our upcoming prospects to better address the Medicare challenge. Yes, there is a palpable *anticipation* emerging because we now have an opportunity that we never had before. Let me explain.

For years, we couldn't get much attention on Capitol Hill to address the Medicare coverage problem. Then, more recently, we've effectively verified the benefits of home infusion therapy for Members of Congress and their staffs, who seem to have gained a genuine appreciation for the quality care our field delivers. Yet our problem has been an inaccurate perception that a home infusion benefit would be a new cost to the Medicare program. And we've had real difficulty in challenging that assumption because of the lack of scientifically based data showing savings.

This points to why my previous sense of *wearisome waiting* has been transformed into a high level of *anticipation*, as we look to introduce home infusion legislation in the near future. Through our work with Avalere, one of the most well-respected health policy firms in Washington, we finally have what has been the missing piece to our story. It's been like working a large puzzle and not being able to finish because a piece was missing—well we now have that critical piece via a soon-to-be-released Avalere study that demonstrates home infusion therapy is a saver to the Medicare program, not a cost! Moving forward, when our team is working on Capitol Hill or when NHIA Members reach out to their elected representatives, we will all have an unbiased research report that effectively supports our message—a *valued tool we've never had before*.

Given my observations at our recent 2014 NHIA Annual Conference, my anticipation is also at an all-time high because I truly felt a new level of energy among the membership—a sense that this is our time for success, and that the Avalere study is offering us the best opportunity we've ever had to correct this flawed Medicare policy. We will need every NHIA Member and their staffs to take advantage of this opportunity to engage in telling our message to Congress. I anticipate thousands, not hundreds, of emails being sent—and large numbers of phone and in-person contacts, as well.

Yes, with a *crucial new tool* in hand, and a renewed song of *anticipation* in our hearts, *let's collaborate as never before to actualize a comprehensive Medicare home infusion benefit!*

Best Regards,

