Identifying opportunities to improve patient care while driving down health care delivery costs remains a top priority in the alternate-site health care delivery system. Managed Health Care Associates, Inc. (MHA), based in Florham Park, New Jersey, is leading the charge.

**EXPANDING THE TECHNOLOGY FOOTPRINT**

MHA started 25 years ago as a long-term care pharmacy group purchasing organization (GPO) serving the needs of alternate-site health care providers. Built on a strong commitment to innovation, MHA has maintained its presence as a leading alternate-site GPO in the country while investing in innovative services and solutions for its membership including long-term care pharmacies, infusion providers, specialty pharmacies, home medical equipment providers and assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. The strategic focus is to assist members in creating efficiencies, improving revenue and driving out costs, which allows them to focus on providing optimum care to the patients they serve.

MHA President, Michael J. Sicilian, shared, “If you were to look at MHA today you would see not only one of the country’s leading alternate-site GPO, but also that MHA has evolved to establish itself as a health care services and technology company. The alternate-site health care market is changing dramatically and real-time analytics and tools are essential for our members to succeed. Gaining access to benchmarking and real-time clinical information will be critical in order for our members to compete in the emerging value-based reimbursement models.”

Following MHA’s 2013 acquisition by Roper Industries, MHA added a range of data analytics and clinical software tools to its portfolio of technology-based offerings. A recent addition to this portfolio is Strategic Healthcare Programs (SHP), a company well known for its benchmarking and patient satisfaction survey capabilities. MHA has also developed an innovative, proprietary patient management software system known as Clinical Therapy Management (CTM), to support both patient care and the collection of clinical and dispensing metrics for specialty disease states, including Hepatitis C, IVIG, and HIV. The most recent addition to the MHA technology portfolio is the acquisition of SoftWriters, Inc., recognized as the leading pharmacy operating system and workflow efficiency solution in the long-term care pharmacy space.

“Our members expect us to execute on the basics of the GPO offering, and also depend on us to execute on the technology and software offerings driving the next wave of innovation,” observes Sicilian. “We continue to look around the corner to see what is coming next, and through major investments in technology, provide effective services and solutions.”

**STAYING AHEAD OF CHANGING MARKET TRENDS**

As a health care services and technology company, staying ahead of what’s coming next means that MHA continues to evolve, says Diane Koontz, Senior Vice President of MHA’s Alternate Site Division. “We continue to invest strategically and expand our portfolio of products and services for home infusion and specialty pharmacies,” she says, noting that “our focus is to support member operations with a full line of pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, business services and technology offerings.”

“For example, the cost of drugs is an enormous challenge for our members,” Koontz continues. “2014 is the first year in recent history to see a double-digit increase in prices for generic drugs and prices remain high for specialty injectables—that’s a significant cost center for providers and it affects their profitability,” she observes.

To address surging costs MHA has intensified its focus on the specialty markets. In February, the company brought on a specialty market focused Vice President of Trade Relations and Contracting. “Creating the role was a strategic investment,” says Koontz. “This investment represents MHA’s ongoing commitment to provide a full spectrum of commercial, clinical and technology solutions to our specialty pharmacy members.”

In terms of clinical solutions, MHA also continues to enhance its spectrum of specialty services. A key component is MHA’s innovative Clinical Therapy Management (CTM) patient management software system which can help specialty pharmacies enhance their patient care and also
facilitates the collection of clinical and dispensing metrics required for specialty reporting.

“The MHA CTM platform has already experienced significant member adoption, and implementation of pharmaceutical business partner data programs. With this comprehensive technology platform, our specialty pharmacy members have access to an easy-to-use patient management and support resource that covers key specialty diseases and lets them focus their time where it matters: providing optimum patient care,” adds Koontz.

MHA has worked to support member efforts to advocate for critical legislative and regulatory issues. “Navigating the legislative landscape is increasingly critical to our members’ success,” Koontz observes. “We continually strengthen our involvement and recently expanded our ACO network and legislative affairs team to stay abreast of the regulations that shape our health care delivery system.”

Collaborating to Shape the Future

In order to help members demonstrate the alternate-site care industry’s value to the overall health care system, MHA has partnered closely with NHIA. “We have participated with NHIA’s lobbying group on Capitol Hill and coordinated on the grassroots efforts to pass The Medicare Home Infusion Site of Care Act,” explains Wayne Grau, MHA’s Vice President of Legislative Affairs. “We also promote NHIA and all the great work they have been doing for our members,” he says, noting that NHIA is often invited to speak at MHA events and webinars.

MHA is launching a grassroots campaign with its members to educate members of Congress about what a home infusion pharmacy does. “We will invite legislators to tour a home infusion specialty pharmacy and hear from the pharmacists, staff, and patients about how this industry delivers superior care in a patient-chosen atmosphere and still offers cost savings to the American taxpayer,” explains Grau. “We’ve discussed our plans with the NHIA leadership to ensure that we’re supporting everything they’re doing,” he adds.

Grau also collaborates with industry partners as part of the FIAC. “Interacting with the FIAC allows MHA and our members to get a look into the future of where the home infusion field is heading,” he explains. “The issues we discuss give us a better understanding of how government and business partners view our members and draws our attention to important issues we will need to work on as a group.”

Amid profound changes to the health care system and what is required for success, MHA’s commitment to its members remains a constant. As such, the investment in new and enhanced solutions is set to continue, to be able to help alternate-site health care providers succeed, today and in the future.

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