

Now is the Time—Converting your Patient-Driven Passion into Compelling Political Action

by **Russell Bodoff**

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The late Senator Hubert Humphrey once said “*The moral test of a society is how that society treats those who are in the dawn of life...the children; those who are in the twilight of life...the elderly; and those who are in the shadow of life...the sick, the needy and the handicapped.*”

Without question, the more I learn about our association’s membership, the more affirmed I am that you, the NHIA members, truly pass the above moral test. You care for individuals at every stage of life—and do so with a passion for the highest level of care that permeates every aspect of home-based infusion services. When I visit member pharmacies, I hear the same passionate message from pharmacists, nurses and the rest of the entire interdisciplinary team. It’s an ardent message that is always consistent, always steadfast: *In everything we do, we are driven by what’s best for our patients!*

In our present imprudent environment, where Congressional discussions often center on budget cutting instead of quality of care and the value of one’s life being enhanced, the pressures on those delivering home infusion services are tremendous—but the benevolent passion of such providers remains unabated. To further advance these compassionate efforts, we *must* first establish meaningful home infusion therapy coverage for all Medicare beneficiaries. Our challenge, however, is to induce Members of Congress to feel the passion that drives you. Without knowing you or understanding how alternate-site infusion services are delivered, our vital industry is just another cost in the health care system—where costs are already out of control. We cannot allow your patient-centered passion, along with the quality of your life-sustaining, cost-effective care, to remain an “unknown” to our legislators.

The time is right to convert your patient-driven passion into compelling political action! We are in a major election year—and you must take advantage of the potential that exists to influence local House and Senate Representatives. Remember, every single House Member is up for re-election—and 35 of the 100 Senate seats are being contested. Each of these Representatives will be back in their states for the majority of the days until the elections. This is *your* time and *your* opportunity to help them genuinely recognize the amazing services you offer to home-based patients—while fostering in them the same passion for quality care that I experience every time I visit one of your pharmacies.

You have heard this simple advice before, but it has never been so important...or so essential:

- The best way to have your Representatives comprehend the quality services you provide is to invite them into your alternate-site infusion pharmacy for a hands-on tour...
- Have them meet your staff and let your employees tell their many attentive stories—their passion will be contagious and will surely have a deep impact...
- If possible, have your Representatives meet the patients you care for—there are no better ambassadors for the life-altering quality care you provide each day...
- Should you need guidance to engage in this worthy endeavor, contact John Magnuson, NHIA’s Vice President of Legislative Affairs, at 703-838-2664 (or by e-mail at john.magnuson@nhia.org)...

In 2009, Congress will likely start to look at major health care reform. We must ensure that their experiences from the visits to your pharmacies are clearly etched in their minds when they do. This cannot be a financial story—it needs to transcend dollars and cents. This must be a common sense “human story” about how and why infusion services for home-based patients are so imperative.

In closing, don’t forget the legacy message of Senator Humphrey. Even in the midst of daunting challenges, you pass the health care morality test twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week—and I am profoundly proud of you all.

Regards,

