



National Home Infusion Association

AS WE SEE IT

Home Infusion—It's About Time We Tell Our Story!

by Russell Bodoff

NHIA Executive Director

When I joined NHIA as your new Executive Director last year, I saw many opportunities and challenges facing our organization. In particular, there were two areas that the Board and I recognized as being the most critical to address at the outset: (1) NHIA's unstable financial position and (2) the flaw in the Medicare law that denies benefits for the services, equipment and supplies provided for home infusion. Both issues are essential to NHIA members' success—and, as such, have been vital matters for us all to collaborate around.



While NHIA's financial status was extremely negative, I am thrilled to again share that—with your help and partnership—we've unequivocally turned this situation around. Through enormously positive responses to the membership transition (from individual to company-based memberships) and increased support from our valued business firms, we have together strengthened the NHIA financial position and its ability to serve members. Our joint collaborations have led to this early success, and I applaud you all. Fixing Medicare's home infusion coverage deficiencies will, once again, necessitate that type of ardent enthusiasm, teamwork, and partnership!

Already, with John Magnuson aboard as our VP of Legislative Affairs, we have made great progress on Capitol Hill—but we still have a long way to go and it is time to further unite, collaborate and tell our convincing story! Looking towards 2009, health care reform is sure to be a major topic of the 111th Congress. And while the motivating force for change may well be cost control rather than quality of care, that congressional mentality may provide us with a unique opportunity to differentiate our cause. Yes, there will be a huge number of health care organizations pushing their agendas (many much larger than us, with more dollars), but we have one major advantage. **Our story is one of quality care associated with costs savings**—and we can jointly leverage that reality to play productively to the discussions and contemporary directions of the new Congress.

Working together, this is our moment to stand up and be heard! This is the time for us to:

- Say older adults must no longer be denied the ability to obtain quality infusion care in their homes, when patients on private plans have received that benefit for years...
- Highlight (during such a difficult budget era) the insanity of spending more Medicare dollars to put people in hospitals or nursing homes, when that care can be provided at much lower costs in the patient's home—with better clinical outcomes, in the setting where they and their physicians want such treatment to be delivered....
- Call for all providers, manufactures, service companies, GPOs, etc... involved in the alternate-site infusion field to genuinely come together and ignite the grassroots efforts required to convince Congress that cost-savings change, inclusive of improved patient care, can be a reality...
- Make the needed investment of time, energy and financial resources to assure our story is told—and is heard...

The time to act is now, if we are to achieve success in 2009. We will not win this legislative battle by outspending other groups. Yes, we must still raise sufficient funds to actualize our advocacy plan—but our powerful tools for legislative victory must be our passion, our drive, our commitment to patients and the recognition that if our legislators cannot remedy an issue like Medicare reimbursement for home infusion (where the solution is so obvious), how will Congress ever address the larger issues facing our nation's health care system.

"The Home Infusion Story"—it's about quality care and outcomes. It's about quality of life and patient satisfaction. It's about lower costs. **And quite frankly, it's about time we effectively tell our story—I urge you to truly get involved!**

Regards,

Collaboration Alert: Help Tell Our Compelling Story!

If you and your organization are interested becoming an active participant in NHIA advocacy activities, please contact John Magnuson, Vice President of Legislative Affairs at john.magnuson@nhia.org or 703-838-2664. **Act now!**