

Active Membership Collaboration and Engagement is Key to Driving Future Success

by **Russ Bodoff**

NHIA President



As I reflect upon everything that transpired at our March 5, 2009 Legislative Hill Day in Washington, D.C., I am filled with an enormous amount of pride for the NHIA membership who joined together as one passionate, focused voice on Capitol Hill. We knew our goal of 300 participants for that day was very ambitious—particularly in light of the previous response to NHIA Hill Days, which averaged only about one third of that number. Yet in 2009, the groundswell of member enthusiasm that began on the first day of our Annual Conference continued to grow exponentially as that week progressed, and our challenge quickly shifted from meeting our goal of 300 Hill Day attendees to accommodating the incredible expanding ranks of advocates who were stepping forward to speak on behalf of the elderly and disabled. Our total presence on March 5th numbered well over 350 advocates, who completely filled the largest meeting room on Capitol Hill for our home infusion educational forum. The energy of this group of committed volunteers permeated every congressional visit we made—and the results are still being seen today (see p.23 for a full recap of the 2009 NHIA Legislative Hill Day).

Since Hill Day, we have witnessed an amazingly dramatic increase in our Senate and House co-sponsorship for S.254 and H.R. 574—in fact, at the time of this printing, we are now up to 11 co-sponsors in the Senate and 75 in the House (the highest co-sponsorship numbers NHIA has ever had for any Bill). We certainly can take a moment to pat ourselves on the back—but only a moment, as we absolutely can't lose this momentum! Now that we see a real shot for success, the NHIA membership must further step-up our grassroots efforts substantially (see p.29 for more on our legislative progress and still needed action steps). As you hear from John Magnuson, NHIA's Vice President of Legislative Affairs, over the next several months, please carefully consider the impact your personal efforts could have if you followed the path he is outlining for reaching out to key members of Congress (especially those who Chair critical committees, sub-committees, task groups, and caucuses). With an increased effort, we will together achieve the measure of success that is closer now than ever before—passage of our Medicare legislation!

Our efforts to best represent the interests and needs of our members also go well beyond our legislative agenda, encompassing a number of equally important initiatives. The NHIA Board of Directors is in the process of finalizing a three-year strategic plan, which we will share with you in the near future. In the plan, you will see the new programs and initiatives that will drive the direction and resources of your association for the coming years. The NHIA Board and its Executive Committee will continually evaluate the association's performance against the goals in the strategic plan to help ensure the short- and long-term needs of the association are being met—while also growing the strength of the field overall.

One of the most exciting new initiatives we will be undertaking is centered on the collection of data. Currently being established by the NHIA Board of Directors and the innovative companies that comprise the Future of Infusion Advisory Council (FIAC), this initiative will consider the many aspects of data important to the future advancement of our field—from demographic, clinical, product/supply, and legislative perspectives:

- A lack of comprehensive marketplace data availability drives the need for accurate information about the size, scope, and impact of the home infusion field.
- Additionally, a lack of common definitions for data capture and reporting prevents home infusion providers from benchmarking their results across the industry—and from potentially establishing home infusion standards of clinical practice and patient care.
- This same data capture and reporting could result in enhanced product decision making capabilities, as well as the ability to demonstrate high-quality care via outcome results (even validating the cognitive clinical services provided to patients in the alternate-site setting).
- From a legislative perspective, many hurdles could be easily overcome with cost savings data and as other pertinent information that could be shared with Congressional offices.
- Lastly, in the future when our Medicare legislation is approved, we will need this data to guide the development of a fair and appropriate reimbursement schedule.

As we move forward with our comprehensive data initiatives, we will seek, and genuinely need, the participation of all our members in this exciting activity. Each of you will be a beneficiary of the work you help to produce!

This year has started with a bang—and I deeply believe that if we sustain and expand this high level of member involvement, partnership, and teamwork, we will continue to make historical strides. Again, let me thank you for your ongoing support of NHIA—and **invite you to engage in even greater collaborations!**

Regards,

