



National Home Infusion Association

AS WE SEE IT

It Is Teamwork That Drives Success...

by Russell Bodoff

NHIA President

I am eager to share some great news with you—as well as identify key challenges we continue to face. In the last two months, we've made significant progress in our effort to gain support for fixing Medicare's home infusion reimbursement deficiencies:

1. On September 16, 2008, Senators Lincoln and Snowe introduced S. 3505, the "Medicare Home Infusion Therapy Coverage Act of 2008" into the Senate (a companion bill to our House legislation, H.R. 2567).
2. Also in September, we received confirmation that the General Accounting Office (GAO) will conduct a study of the Home Infusion field, which we hope will provide supporting statistical data for our legislation.
3. And finally, on October 15, 2008, *The Wall Street Journal* published a major feature on the home infusion reimbursement challenge, titled "As Home IVs Grow, Medicare Patients Miss Out"—a copy of this story can be found in this issue of INFUSION on page 38.



Is this exciting? You bet it is! *The Wall Street Journal* article has already generated other notable stories in different publications—and will play a critical role in supporting our messages to Congressional members and staff, both now and next year in the 111th Congress. As I outlined at our 2008 Annual Conference, securing substantial coverage in a national publication about the Medicare home infusion dilemma—along with our related messages—was to be an essential part of our public relations and legislative strategies. **And while we clearly did achieve success in this crucial area, it almost didn't happen!**

With this huge prospect of positive exposure in *The Wall Street Journal* literally hanging in the balance, we were seriously confronted by problematic issues that I've raised previously with the NHIA membership. First was our total deficit of genuine patient stories featuring individuals unable to receive infusion treatments at home because of the lack of meaningful Medicare coverage. Secondly, we encountered extreme difficulty in acquiring photos of patients obtaining infusion in their homes. Fortunately, in the end, we resolved both difficulties by attaining a patient story from a physician society we are collaborating with around our legislation and via one of our business firm affiliate members providing a patient photo that eventually was used in the article.

But just think about this for a moment—we almost missed-out on quite likely the largest PR opportunity that NHIA has ever had to date, primarily because we (still) have not received even one Medicare patient story from the entire NHIA membership.

I am keenly aware that each of you is busy with way more work than there are hours in the day. And I continue to be so proud of the passion and quality of care that you deliver to your patients everyday. However, this is your future at stake—and home infusion providers must dramatically escalate their efforts to identify and share patient stories:

- While in most cases you are not treating such patients due to the lack of a meaningful Medicare benefit, your company can contact discharge planners and physicians in your community to develop leads for these stories. Also, your own intake departments can often offer leads for patients you were not able to treat due to lack of reimbursement.
- If you do not have photos representing the impressive care you provide in the patient's home, try to have some pictures taken (nurses can even bring a digital camera out with them to get some shots).
- NHIA has sample release forms for you to use for sharing stories and/or photos—**kindly contact John Magnuson, Vice President of Legislative Affairs at john.magnuson@nhia.org or 703-838-2664** if you need assistance or if you have a patient story and/or a photo to share.

The NHIA team is working hard on your behalf—and is totally committed to achieving success. However, we cannot do it alone. We need the NHIA membership to be fully engaged and generating the tools required for cultivating the outcomes that you and your patients deserve. If we thrive in our legislative efforts, it will be rooted in producing results as an energized team of stakeholders. And if we fail, it will be due to the dangers of apathy. There is way too much at stake for both our patients and your business success to allow apathy to win out.

Regards,