



EMBARGOED

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Contact: Stephanie Tipple
Director of Communications & Marketing
stephanie.tipple@nhia.org
(703) 838-2690

Major Health Systems Ask CMS to Waive Home Infusion Restrictions; 160+ Stakeholders Endorse Legislative Remedy

- *Today, Medicare FFS lacks home access for patients who rely on IV drugs to manage chronic disease or acute conditions.*
- *Health systems, hospitals, patients, and other stakeholders recognize the urgent need to allow patients to be treated at home.*
- *Over 180 House Members and 30 Senators joined a pair of recent letters to HHS and CMS echoing these concerns.*

Alexandria, Va. (April 20, 2020) – As several prominent health systems call on Medicare to lift restrictions on home infusion during the current public health emergency, more than 160 stakeholders are announcing their support for concept legislation that would allow patients who need intravenous (IV) medications – but don’t otherwise need to be hospitalized – to receive their treatments at home.

This need is acute for hospitals, which are dedicating their capacity to treating COVID-19 patients, and for patients with underlying health conditions, who face increased risks and have been highly encouraged by public health experts to abide by stay-at-home orders. These concerns were detailed in a pair of recent letters from [181 House Members](#) and [30 Senators](#) to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma.

Currently, Medicare only offers home-based infusion services for a limited subset of drugs (i.e. those that are covered under the Durable Medical Equipment benefit because they require an external infusion pump to administer). However, there are many other drugs that can be infused in the home – for which the commercial market offers

comprehensive coverage for a wide range of professional pharmacy and nursing services, as well as the necessary equipment and supplies.

Medicare does not currently offer comparable reimbursement for the necessary equipment, supplies, or professional services. As a result, millions of seniors with underlying health care conditions don't have coverage for home-based care and are forced to either pay out-of-pocket, defy stay-at-home orders, or skip needed medical treatments.

To ensure Medicare beneficiaries have access to infused drugs in their home during this public health emergency, several of the country's leading health systems have submitted a waiver request urging CMS to rely on the agency's regulatory flexibilities to allow home infusion therapy for all Medicare beneficiaries during the current public health emergency.

Additionally, more than 160 hospitals, patient groups, and other stakeholders are announcing their support for concept legislation that would:

- **Cover Home Infusion Equipment, Supplies and Professional Services.** For the duration of the current public health emergency, Medicare coverage of all essential elements of home infusion would be provided for all drugs, including those billed to the Medicare Part D program, upon receipt of a physician order. Qualifying providers would include a hospital, physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, home health agency, home infusion pharmacy, and durable medical equipment supplier.
- **Adequately Reimburse Providers.** To compensate providers for infusion services offered in the home setting, Medicare would reimburse at the same rate as for drug administration in hospital outpatient departments. Coverage would encompass both nursing services and professional pharmacy services (i.e. assessments, education, patient monitoring and remote services). It is critical that payment not be contingent on face-to-face nursing visits as many of the planning and coordination for home infusion takes place remotely. Commercial plans currently pay on a "per diem" basis for each day the drug is infused.
- **Maintain Current Drug and Home Health Reimbursement.** For drugs that are currently covered "incident to" a physician's professional service, drug coverage would remain under Part B at ASP+6%. For home infusion drugs that are currently covered under Medicare Part D, there would be no change in coverage or reimbursement. Patients who are receiving nursing care under a Part A home

health episode would still have access to home infusion services in addition to their home health benefit.

“There are millions of Medicare patients with underlying health conditions who require ongoing access to infused or injected medications,” said **President & CEO of the National Home Infusion Association Connie Sullivan, BSPHarm**. “Unfortunately, due to Medicare’s limited home infusion benefit, treating these patients at home is often not an option. In order to protect these individuals, it is critical that they can access their medicines in the home setting to avoid putting themselves at risk.”

“Home infusion is extremely important for many people living with ALS because they require IV medication delivered on a regular basis to reduce symptoms” noted **President and CEO of the ALS Association Calaneet Balas**. “Currently, Medicare beneficiaries with ALS may be able to purchase their IV medication through Medicare Part D drug insurance but the services of a home infusion clinician are not covered and must be paid out of pocket. We urge the Administration and Congress to remove barriers to home infusion – especially now when people living with ALS should not be in hospital settings where they might inadvertently become exposed to COVID-19 or other infectious diseases.”

“Patient care is rapidly moving out of the hospital and into other settings,” said **Chief Clinical Officer of Partners Healthcare System Gregg S. Meyer, MD, MSc**. “Being able to deliver these services to patients at home allows us to provide a new level of safety and convenience while preserving our acute care hospital capacity for others who need that higher level of care. This is an important tool in our response to the pandemic, but I believe it is also the right model of care for the future.”

“Keeping our patients safe during this pandemic is our top priority,” added **Dr. Ryan W. Thompson of Massachusetts General Hospital**. “Having the ability to deliver more infused treatments in the home could make a real difference in maintaining the safety of many of our most clinically vulnerable patients.”

“Home infusion therapy has been demonstrated to be an effective and efficient manner for caring for patients,” said **President of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice William A. Dombi**. “The limitations in Medicare have prevented millions from receiving needed care in the home. We now have the opportunity to fix this long-standing problem.”

“The current COVID crisis has brought to light many cases of inequality and disparity within our communities and healthcare system,” said **President of the Association for Vascular Access Lori Kaczmarek, MSN, RN, VA-BC™**. “One example exists between individuals who have health care covered commercially and those covered by Medicare. Medicare does not offer coverage for needed equipment, supplies or professional services that an individual receiving the same drug therapy but covered by commercial insurance receives. This difference is needlessly exposing vulnerable, high-risk individuals to hospital or infusion center environments where they can more likely be exposed to coronavirus. Those covered by Medicare may be forgoing vital infusion therapy out of fear of exposure, lack of transportation, and financial hardship brought on by this crisis.”

“Home infusion providers have the capacity to treat hundreds-of-thousands of patients as hospitals and nursing facilities are being pushed to capacity,” said **NHIA Board Chair Logan Davis, PharmD, MBA of Vital Care Home Infusion Services**. “Regardless of any change in policy, the home infusion community is working with health care providers to bring their resources to bare and keep the most vulnerable patients at home. While this can be a challenge for patients in traditional Medicare – where coverage is limited – the home infusion community is committed to playing a vital role in addressing this public health emergency.”

Over 160 Endorsing Organizations

Abington Jefferson Hospital

Advanced Pharmacy Services, LLC

AdventHealth

Advocate Aurora Health

Alice Peck Day Hospital

Align Infusion of Louisiana, LLC

Alliance for Pharmacy Compounding

ALS Association

American Academy of Home Care Medicine

American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine

American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition

American Society of Consultant Pharmacists

Amerita

Anna Jaques Hospital

ARJ Infusion Services

Association for Vascular Access
Atticus Group, LLC
Avera Health System
B. Braun Medical Inc.
Beth Israel
Beverly Hospital
BioEthics Solutions, Inc.
Bioplus
Birmingham Home Infusion, LLC
Boston Medical Center
Bridgton Hospital
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Brightree
Brindley's Family Pharmacy
Burnham's Vital Care, LLC
Cape Cod Hospital
CarePro Health Services
Carmichael Vital Care Pharmacy, Inc.
Carroll Apothecary, Inc
Catholic Medical Center
Central Maine Medical Center
Challenge Care Pharmacy
Chartwell Pennsylvania, LP
Cheshire Medical Center
Concord Hospital
Conner & McConaghy Inc.
Cumberland Special Care Pharmacy, LLC
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
Dixie Infusion Pharmacy LLC
Druid City Infusion
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Elliot Hospital
Emerson Hospital
Etown Infusion Pharmacy
ExceleraRx Corp.
Exeter Hospital
Fairview Pharmacy Services
Falmouth Hospital
Faulkner Hospital

Foothills Professional Pharmacy, LTD
Frisbie Memorial Hospital
GBS|CIDP Foundation International
Gem Drugs, Inc.
Guardian Pharmacy of TN One, LLC
Healix
Healthwise Pharmacy of Greenville, Inc.
Heartland Infusion, LLC
Horizon Healthcare Services
Immune Deficiency Foundation
Immunoglobulin National Society
Infusion Nurses Society
Infusion Solutions Inc.
Intramed Plus
Irwin Pharmacy Services, LLC
Jefferson Bucks Hospital
Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital
Jefferson Frankford Hospital
Jefferson Hospital for Neuroscience
Jefferson Methodist Hospital
Jefferson Stratford Hospital
Jefferson Torresdale Hospital
Jefferson Washington Township Hospital
Jim B. Spears, Inc.
Johns Hopkins Health System
Kabafusion
Kay's Hideaway Pharmacy, Inc.
KCC, Inc.
Lahey Hospital & Medical Center
Little Fish Pharmacy, LLC
Lowell General Hospital
Magee Rehabilitation Hospital
Maine Medical Center
Managed Health Care Associates, Inc.
Marble City Health and Infusion Services, LLC
Massachusetts General Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Mid Coast Hospital
Midsouth Medical Specialties, LLC

Moog Medical
Mt. Ascutney Hospital
Myasthenia Gravis Hope Foundation
National Association of Specialty Pharmacy
National Home Infusion Association
New England Baptist Hospital
New England Life Care, Inc.
New London Hospital
Newberry County Memorial Hospital
Newton Wellesley Hospital
North Shore Medical Center
NuDak Ventures, LLC
Oakstead Infusion Pharmacy, LLC
OHSU Home Infusion Pharmacy Services
Option Care Health
OptionOne Pharmacy
Paragon Healthcare
Partners HealthCare
Patient Services Inc.
Pen Bay Medical Center
Pharmacy Plus Infusion Services of Hattiesburg, Inc.
Premier healthcare alliance
ProHealth Pharmacy Solutions
PromptCare, Inc.
Provista
Quality Respiratory, Inc.
RCVC
Red River Pharmacy Long Term Care, LLC
Red River Pharmacy of Jonesboro, LLC
Red River Pharmacy of Little Rock, LLC
Redline Pharmacy Solutions, LLC
Rumford Hospital
Rutland Regional Medical Center
RX Remedies, LLC
Sartin's Vital Care, Inc
Sentara Healthcare
SMPE, Inc.
Soileaus Vital Care Inc.
South Shore Hospital

Southern Maine Medical Center
Southern NH Medical Center
Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System
Speare Memorial Hospital
St. Joseph Hospital
St. Mary's Regional Medical Center
Stephens Memorial Hospital
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
Total Respiratory Medications, Inc.
Tufts Medical Center
Twin States Infusion, LLC
Union Care Pharmacy, LLC
Union Specialty Pharmacy, Inc.
University of Iowa Community HomeCare
University of Massachusetts Med. Ctr.
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
Upstate Homecare
US Hereditary Angioedema Association
V.C. Home Infusion Service
Valley Infusion, LLC
Valley Regional Hospital
Vencer Care, LLC
Vital Care Home Infusion Services
Vital Care Pharmacy of Norfolk, Inc.
VNA Home Care Services c/o Pharmacy
W'Care, LLC
Weeks Memorial Hospital
Wentworth-Douglass Hospital
Winchester Hospital
York Hospital
Your Compounding Pharmacy LLC

NHIA is a trade association that represents companies that provide infusion therapy to patients in their homes, as well as companies that manufacture and supply infusion and specialty pharmacy products. Infusion therapy involves patient-specific compounded medications, supplies, and a range of pharmacy, nursing, and other clinical services for

delivering care to patients in the home setting. For more information, visit www.nhia.org.

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