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Congress Approves Home Infusion Therapy Legislation

New Law Will Allow Vulnerable Medicare Beneficiaries Access to Life-Saving Infusion Therapy in the Home

Alexandria, VA – (February 9, 2018) The National Home Infusion Association (NHIA), representing providers and suppliers of home and specialty infusion therapy, applauds Congress for passing home infusion legislation today that will allow Medicare’s most vulnerable beneficiaries to have access to life-saving infusion therapies in the home.

The new law remedies a gap in reimbursement for home infusion clinical services that was created in 2016 by the *21st Century Cures Act (Cures Act)*. Specifically, Congress has now established a temporary transitional reimbursement beginning January 1, 2019, for clinical services related to the administration of Medicare Part B Durable Medical Equipment (DME) home infusion drugs. The temporary reimbursement will remain in place until a permanent reimbursement for services, put in place as part of the *Cures Act*, is implemented in 2021.

The *Cures Act* in 2016 made two significant changes to Medicare reimbursement for home infusion therapies. Effective January 1, 2017, Congress dramatically cut reimbursement for home infusion therapy drugs from an average wholesale price-based formula to an average sales price-based formula. At the same time, recognizing the value of home infusion therapy and the unique clinical service requirements necessary to deliver infusion therapy in the home, Congress created a new Medicare reimbursement benefit for home infusion professional services. However, the new benefit in the *Cures Act* was designed not to take effect until 2021, thus creating a four-year reimbursement gap that began January 2017. The new law, with reimbursement slated to begin in 2019, will fix that gap.

“The legislation will allow Medicare beneficiaries, specifically those with heart failure and immunodeficiency diseases, to receive critical life-saving infusion therapies in their own home,” said NHIA President and CEO Tyler Wilson. “Home infusion therapy is a hallmark of today’s changing health care delivery system. Thankfully, patients whose immune systems are already compromised will no longer be forced to access care in institutional settings including hospitals and skilled nursing facilities where they face a higher risk of infection,” he added.

“The home and specialty infusion community has been working earnestly to remedy a consequence of the *21st Century Cures Act* so that patients can continue to receive in their homes the infusion therapy treatments their doctors prescribe. We are fortunate to have had the support and commitment of Senate and House leadership throughout this year-long legislative process and appreciate their perseverance in getting this bill passed,” stated Wilson. “Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY), Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI), Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-NV), Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR), Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX), Ways and Means Ranking Member Richard Neal (D-MA), Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR), Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Rules Committee Chairman Pete Sessions (R-TX), Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Congressmen Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), and former Congressman Pat Tiberi (R-OH) have all played a role in this positive turn for Medicare beneficiaries. We look forward to working with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to swiftly implement the provisions of this law,” he added.

NHIA is a trade association that represents companies which 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 the association at: www.nhia.org.