

Onward and Upward: The Path Ahead

Like many people, I see the New Year as a fresh start; an opportunity to consider new endeavors, aspirations, and possibilities. While I am eager to make a positive impact on the future of the industry, it is appropriate to give pause and reflection to the advancements the field has experienced since its quiet beginnings.

This year, NHIA celebrates an important anniversary. From its founding 25 years ago, NHIA has evolved from a small professional society of individual members working to navigate through an increasingly complicated health care system, to a major trade association with a membership composed of well-respected home infusion providers, manufacturers, suppliers and service companies, working collaboratively to improve the care and quality of life for patients. Stronger today than ever before, the Association continues to serve as the forum for the home and specialty infusion community to collaborate and speak with one voice.

It was the power of that single voice that helped lead to a major achievement late last year. A threat emerged this past December that could have led to the inclusion of the Average Sales Price (ASP) reimbursement methodology for drugs under the Medicare Part B Durable Medical Equipment (DME) benefit as part of a larger piece of health care legislation. When the home infusion community was faced with this threat, many members of NHIA, in concert with other stakeholders, sprang into action to assist the Association's staff in educating lawmakers about the disadvantages of utilizing ASP pricing without recognizing the service components involved in home infusion therapy and other similar therapies. Though challenging, this occurrence emphasized the value of grassroots efforts, and the importance of maintaining a strong, proactive representation on Capitol Hill.

With the 2016 congressional session underway, the ASP pricing threat is far from over. What matters most now, is what we do next. We must consider the changes we want and need to make, and resolve to follow through on those changes. Through our advocacy efforts, there is greater awareness and support of our proposed legislation, the *Medicare Home Infusion Site of Care Act*. This year, we will have the best opportunity to achieve a comprehensive benefit for Medicare infusion patients if we can come together and collectively carry to Capitol Hill our position that the *Medicare Home Infusion Site of Care Act* is the right solution to the challenges we face under Medicare. I look forward to working with each of you as we fight to achieve our legislative goal.

Through the years, the field has created innovative solutions and embraced advances in technology to improve the quality of life for patients. Today, that same creative mindset continues to benefit patients and their families. In this issue, you will read about providers who are increasingly using mobile health technology and apps to improve patient care. Another article highlights the creative, patient-centered ways our members are collaborating to deliver skilled nursing services to patients. This type of multi-disciplinary coordination in the home care setting was groundbreaking 25 years ago, and it is becoming more and more prevalent as policymakers increasingly shift care to the outpatient setting.

As we contemplate the future of the field, I must call attention to the work of the National Home Infusion Foundation. At NHIA's 2016 Annual Conference & Exposition, the Foundation will present scholarship awards to both a pharmacist and a nurse who excel in patient care and demonstrate leadership in advancing the field. The Foundation has also identified a number of other initiatives with the potential to shape the future delivery of infusion therapy, and I invite you to visit the Foundation's website (www.nhif.org) to learn more about these opportunities and how you can participate.

The start of a new year may be about fresh beginnings, but it is also a time for reaffirming our commitment to achieving critical goals. Throughout its 25 year history, NHIA has strived to stay true to its core mission which is to serve the interests of its members and to advocate on behalf of home-based infusion patients. I look forward to continuing along that path while ensuring the future growth and success of the industry.



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