

Stepping Away from your Inbox

One of the earliest opportunities I had to interact with NHIA members was during a visit with the leader of a longstanding provider in New Jersey. I remember sitting across from her as she spoke enthusiastically about the value NHIA's Annual Conference & Exposition offers to her and her team. She applauded the first-rate educational content, the diversity of solutions found in the exposition, and the formal and informal networking opportunities.

To this provider, however, networking is where the big bang of ROI kicks in. The true return on investment she says, happens outside the seminar rooms in the myriad of social connections that occur during coffee breaks or while browsing the exhibit hall. To me, her comments are not all that surprising.

The importance of face-to-face meetings should not be underestimated. Too much time behind a desk or in front of a computer can cause any one of us to feel a little stale. There's an incredible amount of sharing, learning, and networking I would not have experienced had I given in to the persistent dilemma of "Dare I take time away from the office?" Reflecting back on the conferences I have attended over the course of my career, the best ones have left me energized and ready to use the ideas, knowledge, and connections gained at the meeting as a springboard for advancing my work. I am confident that this year's NHIA meeting will provide a wealth of information for attendees to readily apply when they return to their workplaces.

At the center of NHIA's annual meeting is the Exposition. This year, we have an incredible array of more than 110 exhibitors offering the latest products, services, and solutions to meet the unique and changing needs of every home and specialty infusion business.

This issue of *INFUSION* focuses on risk management, a matter we must all consider as we witness the shifts occurring within health care. On page 18, there is a revealing article on proactive steps home infusion providers are taking to avoid the risk of complications during a patient's transition from acute to home care. Equally interesting is a feature discussing how six clinicians prepare for, and manage, anaphylaxis and acute infusion reaction in patients.

In evaluating risk, it is important to safeguard our interests in other areas, including those related to our legislative efforts. NHIA recently made a significant investment in a Washington, D.C., lobbying firm that adds critical government affairs capabilities to those that already exists at the Association. Beefing up our ability to lobby Congress, address issues at CMS and the FDA, and become a more forceful advocate for the home and specialty infusion community, was a straightforward and time-sensitive decision for NHIA. We saw a growing risk that certain developments on Capitol Hill could derail our legislative efforts related to the *Medicare Home Infusion Site of Care Act*. In working to advance the Medicare legislation, NHIA has also been defending against changes that could occur with respect to drug reimbursement under Medicare Part B Durable Medical Equipment (DME).

Looking back several months, our concern escalated over the fact that the savings gained from a change to ASP pricing could be incorporated into legislation other than the *Medicare Home Infusion Site of Care Act* and thereby be directed to pay for another program that would not benefit our patients. NHIA has long argued that any change to DME drug pricing must be considered in conjunction with a payment structure for home infusion services, which is proposed by the *Medicare Home Infusion Site of Care Act*. The added expense taken on by the Association in retaining the new lobbying firm represents a serious financial challenge for NHIA, and as such, we are looking for financial support from members. While at the Conference, you will learn about how you can make a contribution to NHIA in support of the accelerated legislative battle now underway. The journey to secure a comprehensive Medicare home infusion benefit has been long, but today we are closer than ever before in achieving our goal. And, while it's within our grasp, more work is needed.

Securing the Medicare benefit is just one of the many ways we plan to build upon the strong foundation on which this industry is built. As we reflect on the 25-year history of NHIA, we must continue to strengthen collaboration within the community. Speaking with one voice and working together toward common goals will ensure the long-term success of the field.



