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NHIA, key stakeholders urge Congress to prioritize home-based care in coronavirus legislation

Alexandria, Va. (March 17, 2020) –As the number of U.S. COVID-19 cases continue to increase, a group of key stakeholders including the [National Home Infusion Association \(NHIA\)](#) is urging Congress to quickly adopt legislation that would free up capacity in institutional settings and limit exposure for our vulnerable Medicare population. Specifically, the *Preserving Patient Access to Home Infusion Act* (S. 3457; H.R. 6218) will help keep high-risk patients with serious infections, heart failure, immune diseases, cancer, and other conditions out of institutional settings and allow them to receive treatment at home.

Given recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that patients with underlying health conditions should avoid exposure to healthcare facilities, ensuring access to home-based care is more important than ever. “As public health officials urge vulnerable patients to avoid health care facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes to avoid exposure to COVID-19, the value of home-based care has never been so clear,” the letter states. “We urge your Committee to advance [this bill] as urgently as possible.”

The *Preserving Patient Access to Home Infusion Act* provides important clarifications to the *21st Century Cures Act* that will ensure Medicare recognizes the full spectrum of professional services provided in home infusion – including the extensive pharmacy services that minimize the need for face-to-face interactions and are integral to safe and effective treatment. This will enable the delivery of infused medications in patients’ homes, protecting those with underlying health conditions from the risk of disease, relieving burden on hospitals, and creating savings for patients and taxpayers.

“Home infusion providers have the capacity to treat hundreds-of-thousands of patients, especially as the risk intensifies that hospitals and nursing facilities will be pushed to capacity in the weeks ahead,” 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.”

Meanwhile, in a separate letter, NHIA is offering several recommendations to the Department of Health and Human Services on steps they can take to protect the public, increase the capacity of the health care delivery system, and improve access to home infusion therapies. For example, the letter suggests that Medicare could consider using their Section 1135 waiver authority to reduce administrative burdens and increase flexibilities in the delivery of health care with the intent of promoting greater access to care during this national emergency.

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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