



## **EMBARGOED**

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### **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](http://www.nhia.org).*

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