

# Home Infusion Update

Published By HomeCare I.V. of Bend, Inc • 541.382.0287 • solutions@homecareiv.com

Quarter 3rd - 2005 • Volume 4 • Number 3

## Mr. Ed Goes to Washington

The National Home Infusion Association hosted its first-ever Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. September 19 and 20.

Ed. Neumann, HomeCare I.V. of Bend, Inc.'s Vice-President and CFO, was among 112 attendees from 34 states that convened for the event that focused on raising congressional awareness of home infusion therapies and ensuring that they are appropriately covered under Medicare.

In a one-day lobbying blitz, Ed joined fellow NHIA members as they visited more than 100 congressional offices, focusing their discussions on significant gaps in coverage for home infusion therapies under the new Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit. The final rule released by CMS does not provide for coverage of the clinical, supply and equipment aspects of infusion therapy. This will limit access for Medicare beneficiaries to home infusion therapies and creates potentially serious patient safety issues.

Ed met with Valerie Henry, Legislative Assistant for Health Care for Congressman Greg Walden, and Stephanie Kennan, Legislative Assistant for Health Care for Senator Ron Wyden. **NHIA has recommended** that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) use its current authority to **consolidate home infusion coverage under Medicare Part B**, where a limited number of these therapies are already covered. Ed urged Henry and Kennan ask to Oregon's Congressional delegation join the 26 House members and four senators that had already written CMS recommending it take this step.

## Rituximab: Promising in RA and Lupus

The cancer drug rituximab (Rituxan) may benefit lupus patients with central nervous system complications, according to a new U.S. study. "Rituximab appears to be quite effective. It is a kinder, gentler form of treatment lasting up to 6 months with a low risk of side effects, compared to previous treatments of high-dose steroids and chemotherapy," researcher Michael Neuwelt of the University of California, SF and Stanford University, said in a prepared statement. The findings of one small study involving 22 patients were presented at the annual meeting of the European Congress of Rheumatology in Vienna Austria recently. More studies still need to be conducted to determine the effectiveness and safety of rituximab in treating CNS lupus.

A larger study done in the UK with 465 patients found rituximab to be a safe and effective treatment for RA. Rituximab targets a specific type of immune cells and helps control inflammation and pain in arthritis patients.

## HCIV Accreditation Survey

HomeCare I.V. of Bend, Inc. hosted JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) inspector on October 20th and 21st., 2005. Joint Commission evaluates the quality and safety of care for more than 15,000 health care organizations. To maintain and earn accreditation, organizations must have an extensive on-site review by Joint Commission health care professional(s), at least once every three years.

The purpose of the review is to evaluate the organization's performance in areas that affect patient care. Accreditation may then be awarded based on how well the organizations met Joint Commission standards. Only four institutions are accredited by JCAHO in Central Oregon, including St. Charles Medical Center, Doctor's Park Surgery Center, Bend Surgery Center and HomeCare I.V. of Bend, Inc.

The surveyor for Home Care Programs spends time reviewing charts, inspecting the facility, observing preparation of sterile products, interviewing staff, going out of the facility with nursing staff to patient homes, as well as observing nursing care in the facility's infusion suite. All aspects of Home Infusion operations performed at HomeCare I.V. of Bend were evaluated and compared to Joint Commission standards.

Survey of our facility and staff revealed that **HCIV has met the standards and in many areas, exceeded the standards for Joint Commission**. HomeCare I.V. of Bend, Inc. received their continued accreditation and received an excellent review by the surveyor. Congratulations to the entire HCIV team!!

## Midazolam infusion as adjunct to pain management

Patients receiving end-stage pain management with opioids can experience escalation of dosage without adequate relief. Other patients may experience agitation or tremors due to high doses of opioids. The addition of adjunctive pain control can be helpful in treating these problems. Midazolam is a short acting benzodiazepine which provides sedation, amnesia, seizure control and can enhance analgesia. It can be given by continuous infusion subcutaneously or intravenously. Dosages range from 1-15mg/hour with average doses of 2-3mg/hr continuously. The midazolam infusion is titrated up or down based on desired level of sedation, while the opioid infusion may then be reduced if enhanced pain control is achieved.

Addition of midazolam may be a worthwhile consideration when opioid dosage escalates without adequate relief and may allow the patient to rest more peacefully and achieve better pain control than with opioids alone.

Visit our website at [www.homecareiv.com](http://www.homecareiv.com)

## **Annual Open House November 17th 4-8 p.m.**

In **Celebration of National Home Health and Hospice Month**, you are invited to Homecare IV of Bend's annual Open House. The open house this year is being held on Thursday, November 17th from 4-8 p.m. with refreshments and delicious hor d'oeuvres served. Come and join us as we say "Thank You" to our patients, caregivers, physicians and nurses.

We hope to see you here!

## **New Approval for Remicade**

Centocor Inc. announced that Remicade has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of ulcerative colitis. Remicade is now indicated for reducing signs and symptoms, achieving clinical remission and mucosal healing and eliminating corticosteroid use in patients with moderately to severely active UC who have had an inadequate response to conventional therapy. Prior to the approval for UC, Remicade was indicated for the treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis, Crohn's Disease and Ankylosing Spondylitis. It is administered as a weight based intermittent IV infusion every 4-8 weeks depending on the condition being treated.

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### ***Our Staff.....***

NURSES	Betsy N., Betsy Z., Mary, Brad
PHARMACISTS	Annette, Barb, Kerri
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TECHNICIANS	April, Loretta
BILLING	Christine, Janet, Dee
RECEPTION	Anita
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OFFICE TECH	Kaleb, Patrick, Kelly

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