

# NICA 2019 PRIMARY INITIATIVES

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This is a very exciting time in the history of the National Infusion Center Association. Big advocacy wins have allowed NICA to engage in many more conversations with our national partners who promote infusion access. We have outlined the following primary initiatives for 2019 based on notes from conversations with infusion providers across the country. We believe the following primary objectives are consistent with our mission of improving patient access to injectable and infusible medications and will help infusion providers address some of the unique challenges faced when offering infusion services through their practice.

## ADVOCATE FOR PATIENT ACCESS AND THE OFFICE-BASED INFUSION CENTER

In 2019 we will continue to advocate for patient access to the office-administered IV/injectable medications they need and we will continue to advocate for the office-based Infusion Center as a more affordable, accessible, and compassionate alternative to hospital-based sites of care.

Our focus will be to oppose policy decisions and legislation that may: (1) threaten patient access to the office-based infusion delivery channel or their prescribed medication; and/or (2) limit healthcare providers' ability to deliver the high-quality care that their patients need, jeopardizing patient safety, quality of life, or health outcomes.

We are currently working with several coalitions, working groups, and/or task forces to improve patient protections against utilization management strategies like Step Therapy and Non-Medical Switching in targeted states across the country.

As we continue navigating a changing political environment and uncertain health care infrastructure in 2019, we stand ready to engage on issues impacting patient access to the critical care they need.

## DEVELOPING INFUSION CENTER RESOURCES

NICA launched a new website in 2016 to host a series of resources intended to provide greater value to both our member and non-member stakeholders. Through this initiative, we will be providing high-value resources centered on improving infusion providers' capacity to care for patients. Key resources launched in 2016 include: the Infusion Center Locator that helps patients find the most conveniently accessible site of care in which to get their infusions; the Infusion Confusion Forums Community that provide an online support network community for infusion providers and their staff to openly discuss both clinical and non-clinical challenges and collaboratively develop strategies to overcome these challenges; and, our education initiative, which aims to help improve education, awareness, and understanding of office-based infusion.

Resources in development include two late-stage pipeline reports, the first outlining IV/injectable medications and the second outlining IV/injectable biosimilars in Phase III clinical trials or later in the biopharmaceutical development pipeline. We also plan to publish a list of provider-administered intravenous and injectable medications currently on the market with non-cancer indications.

## NICA EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Another way that NICA is committed to supporting the office-based infusion delivery channel is through our education initiative. Our goal is to address deficits in education relating to infusions delivered in the office setting. Through this initiative, we hope to improve awareness and instill a deep understanding of infusion among stakeholders and decision-makers whose decisions are shaping the infusion delivery landscape. With some of our foundational content currently available, we will be focused on co-hosting existing relevant educational material developed by other nonprofit organizations and developing content to fill any deficits or voids in content.

## CO-PAY ASSISTANCE FOR MEDICARE, VETERANS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZED HEALTH PLAN PATIENTS

It is inconceivable that free, non-taxpayer funded assistance be withheld from some of our most vulnerable patients and veterans while allowing unrestricted access to the same free financial assistance for patients with commercial insurance.

Currently, all patients on any government subsidized health plan are ineligible for millions of dollars of free manufacturer co-pay assistance otherwise available to patients with commercial insurance. This issue is not new for NICA; however, it has resurfaced after the HHS cleared the use of co-pay assistance programs for patients enrolled in ACA Healthcare Exchange plans. We believe that this precedent along with other formative arguments may be used to persuade the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), HHS, and/or other federal agencies to release updated guidance that provides a safe-harbor statement allowing patients with government-subsidized insurance (e.g. Medicare, veterans, etc.) to access free manufacturer co-pay assistance programs.

## **2019 INAUGURAL NICA MEETING**

There are many conferences and trade shows hosted by organizations targeting a specific disease and/or specialty, or a specific niche within a particular specialty. Until now, there has been no multispecialty conference/meeting/tradeshow event specifically for infusion providers and staff working within the non-hospital, non-Oncology office-based infusion delivery channel. We believe that many patient access and advocacy issues are not specialty-specific. Therefore, a venue in which the entire office-based infusion channel can connect, collaborate, and advocate for all-win solutions to patient access challenges is critical to the preservation and advancement of the industry. NICA plans to host its inaugural office-based Infusion Center meeting June 21-22, 2019 in Austin, Texas.

## **INFUSION CENTER STANDARDS PROGRAM**

Standards of care and best practices vary widely across the non-hospital, non-Oncology office-based infusion delivery channel. To demonstrate our collective commitment to providing safe, high-quality, and cost-effective care, we, along with our Advisory Committee, are developing unified standards to identify what qualifies as a safe, effective, and clinically excellent Infusion Center. Until we come together as a delivery channel to collaboratively identify what these standards should be, we risk a government agency identifying irrelevant metrics and standards by which Infusion Centers should be measured. NICA is uniquely suited to bring stakeholders together to develop a set of Infusion Center standards that can be used by industry as a guideline for this important emerging medication delivery channel.