

# Michigan Home Health Association

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## Key Legislative Issues - April 2007

### Our MHHA Message to Members of the Michigan Delegation to The Congress

#### Please consider:

- The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission reports that under the home health benefit, certain post-acute care patients not only have outcomes that are as good or better than their peers convalescing in institutions, but that high quality home care is available at a fraction of the cost.
- The White House and the nation's governors have aggressively pursued expansion of the availability of home and community-based services in lieu of more costly and restrictive institution-based care. As a result, Medicaid now funds home care services to a greater degree than does Medicare.
- Medicare began coverage of hospice services in 1982 to care for terminally ill cancer patients. The patient population served by the nation's hospice agencies under Medicare has changed dramatically. Cancer patients now represent less than half of the hospice population. Hospices are caring for patients with more complex diagnoses but for shorter periods of time.
- More and more patients are able to receive their care at home, thanks to advances in health care technology and improvements in the goods and services provided by home medical equipment/infusion-pharmacy providers.

#### **Home care, hospice and home medical equipment/infusion-pharmacy providers seek a number of reforms in order to address their patients' needs in 2007 and beyond.**

#### **Following are our top-ranked legislative priorities for 2007:**

1. Preserve the Full Market Basket Update for Medicare Home Health.
2. Preserve the Full Market Basket Update for the Medicare Hospice Benefit.
3. Oppose Co-Payments for Medicare Home Health Services.
4. Support Increased Medicaid Funding for Home Care; Oppose Medicaid Cuts; Reject Caps on Federal Medicaid Payments.
5. Support the Home Oxygen Patient Protection Act (H.R. 621).
6. Support Fairness, Patient Access in Competitive Bidding for HME (H.R. 1845)

The above priorities are described in detail in Issue Briefs which are included in this packet. You will also find Issue Briefs for additional matters of importance, including:

- Ensure Fairness in Medicare Advantage/Home Health Agency Interface
- Preserve Access to Rural Home Health Services
- Reform the Home Health Wage Index to Achieve Parity Among Health Care Providers
- Recognize Home Telehealth Interactions as Bona Fide Medicare Services
- Fully Reimburse OASIS Costs; Streamline OASIS Requirements; Conduct Research on OASIS Validity.
- Modernize the Medicare Hospice Benefit
- Allow Certain Nurses and Physicians' Assistants to Certify Plans of Care