HOME CARE PITCH ANGLES

Being able to target relevant media stories and tie-in National Home Care & Hospice Month will be essential in garnering local media stories.

CO-PAYS AND CUTS TO INDUSTRY

How the home care industry cuts impacts businesses in each state is an important topic for newspapers. How many people are served by home care and hospice in the state? What is their baby boomer population and how will those people be taken care of as they get older? How many home care and hospice agencies are in the state and what percent of the work force? What will happen if home care agencies close because of cuts in reimbursements? These are good questions to answer and come to the paper with facts. You’ll want to pitch the business, healthcare or health industry writer at your local paper. If there isn’t one, try a managing or deputy editor. For TVs, you’ll need to add a visual element. Perhaps offering a walk-along with a home health aide and patient (with permission from both).

Some talking points include:

- Today, millions of America’s seniors and disabled citizens depend on home care services to remain healthy, stable, and out of costly traditional settings. For decades, caring for the elderly, disabled and chronically ill at home has provided a dignified and high-efficient method of treatment.

- Home-based care is also clinically effective, utilizing advanced technologies and helping to cost effectively manage chronic diseases that account for 75 percent of our nation’s health care spending.

- The recent recommendation of instituting a co-pay per health episode on home care services is a sick tax that falls heavily on the backs of chronically ill Americans. Co-pays have been proven on multiple occasions (as recently as 2003, and going back to 1972) to be disastrous for the quality of care and in fact ineffective in delivering cost reductions.

- Instead of out-of-pocket fees and short-term cuts, we should carefully consider ways to improve home care so that patients can continue to access the services they need in the most cost-effective setting available anywhere – their home.

- Past experience shows that if co-pays are instituted, the number of chronically ill and disabled persons who are forced to apply for help from state Medicaid programs will again increase dramatically, imposing an unnecessary burden on states. The impact of such cost-shifting will precipitate a national crisis as states struggle to carry the weight of caring for the 78 million members of the Baby Boom generation who will require personal care assistance or help with the management of multiple chronic diseases.

JOB GROWTH

- Business writers want to know where the jobs are, especially more so in this economy. Stress to them how home care, hospice and private duty are a growing field people will want to be a part of.

- Registered nurses, home health aides, and personal care aides are among the top five occupations projected to see the largest increase in jobs by 2020 as more people need their services than ever before.

- The latest data from the DOL shows that home care has boomed as American ages and the baby boomers begin entering their golden year.

TECHNOLOGY

- The industry is really moving forward with embracing technology and tele-health, which will allow for more efficient delivery of healthcare to the elderly and homebound. It will allow seniors the option of aging at home for longer periods of time in a more cost effective setting than other healthcare options. Home monitoring devices now have the ability to track pulse rates, body temperature, body weight, blood pressure and capture numerous measures of clinical data.
• Use this new angle to pitch to writers about your agency is doing and how it is trimming costs and changing the face of home care in the 21st century.

LOCAL HERO

• Find a local hero in your community (a nurse or home care aide that is always going the extra mile) to pitch in a feature story to a local feature reporter. These are generally a softer sell, so make sure you have info on the person and a really great story to feature an individual. You’ll also want to make sure they are agreeable to being featured.