



**THOUGHT
LEADERS**

HOME CARE





Welcome To The Neighborhood

Tips For Manufacturer Success In Home Care

Home healthcare is a booming market that is rapidly transforming thanks to increasing consumer demand and policy changes that are dramatically shifting the sector's landscape. The changes make it ripe for manufacturers and distributors to offer their skills as home care services are expected to grow significantly, including hospice and round-the-clock care.

A group of experts from the medical manufacturing and distribution industries met in November at a HIDA Educational Foundation's Home Care Thought Leaders event to discuss what's ahead for home care and to identify challenges and opportunities. They all agreed it's a complex market to navigate. There are multiple types of companies in the home care space, and many different customers – the patient, caregiver, payer, or distributor to name a few.

Home Care Is A Natural Winner

Home health care will continue to surge in popularity. The nation is putting an increased focus on these products and services as a greater share of baby boomers retire and seek additional care options for chronic disease. It's part of a larger trend that's been unfolding over the last decades to decentralize care so that patients are served where they choose. Event participants shared what's top of mind when it comes to servicing the home health care market and offered solutions for success.

Benefits Of Home Care

- Lowest cost for the payer
- Lower infection rates
- Patient wants to be at home in familiar surroundings
- Patient wants to be near family and loved ones
- Patient is not in close contact with sick people
- Patient doesn't have constant doctor or nurse check-ins disrupting sleep

“Shipping a box to a front porch is a whole different ball game than shipping pallets to a hospital.”



—Colton Mason
SVP, Supreme Medical

Co-chair of HIDA’s Home Care Council



Product & Package Design: Keep It Simple

1. **Make products reimbursement-friendly** by considering factors like package quantity

Manufacturer Tip: Monthly reimbursable allowance for foam dressings is 12, but manufacturers currently include 10 in a box. By including 12 per box for home care, you can reduce the labor cost to repackage and expedite the shipping process. The less a distributor is required to touch a product, the better.



2. **Offer a storage-friendly product amount** for an individual in the home
3. **Create simple instructions** that aren’t clinically complex
4. **Include web and email addresses on packaging** to offer more detailed information online
5. **Consider consumer preference for organic** products and environmentally friendly packaging
6. **Make it easy to open package and unbox** to alleviate frustration for frail or tired fingers, and it curbs the need for using a sharp blade to slice open a box
7. **Respect patient privacy** by offering discrete product labeling that doesn’t announce specific personal products such as incontinence items.

Logistics: Make It Seamless

1. **Consider product weight** and whether more than one person is needed for delivery and set-up

Manufacturer Tip: Freight dimensions are just as important to consider as weight. A rolling walker is often shipped in a large box that can incur as much as an additional \$20 in freight cost because of box size. If a manufacturer made just a slight shift in reducing packaging dimensions, costs could go down.



2. **Identify who is responsible for addressing package theft** to address accountability and decide whether a signature should be required upon delivery
3. **Establish alternate delivery points outside of the home** where a patient or caregiver could go to pick up a package
4. **Understand the challenges of urban vs. rural delivery** such as restrictions for large trucks in cities and difficult to navigate roads in farm areas



“We’re working daily to build programs for providers that solve their problems. We’re building best-in-class products. We’re looking at the way it is packaged. We’re offering education to the users.”

– Brent Poythress, VP, HME Corporate Accounts, McKesson Medical-Surgical

Manufacturer Tip: In home care, distributors are not running vans to facilities. It’s important for manufacturers to be aware of home delivery rural freight costs.



5. Offer “smart tracking” for certain items such as temperature-controlled products to alert the customer when product arrives
6. Split shipments to provide faster delivery and superior customer service

Marketing & Sales: Build Consumer Demand

1. Connect with patients digitally via social media platforms

Manufacturer Tip: Connect with the patient every day about the products you make to improve their lives. This is especially important for patients with intimate healthcare needs. For example, Coloplast, which offers ostomy products, has a YouTube channel for consumers. It offers content showing viewers how to use certain products, but also to reassure them that they are part of a supportive, special community whose members understand their challenges.



2. Review company and product SEO and availability of information online as the internet is often the patient’s primary source of information

Manufacturer Tip: Own the cell phone. A large contact manufacturer now offers eye exams over the cell phone. The patient is required to step back from the phone and then the visual exam is administered.



3. Have a presence in support groups to gain a deeper understanding of patient concerns
4. Offer testimonials by trusted partners or other patients about services and products

Priorities For Achieving Success In Home Care

1. Simplify the experience including delivery, packaging, and use
2. Avoid info overload by giving patients the info they need
3. Research reimbursement trends by helping patients understand what’s covered, and which products get reimbursed for which specific episodes of care
4. Educate the new home care patient and family members who may not be fully aware of their options ranging from products and services to shipping and delivery
5. Strive for customer satisfaction for the patient and family’s peace of mind



“It was about items and costs. Now it’s about value-based care with a goal of driving costs down and quality up.”

—**Josh Heuchan**, founder and managing director, Healiant Training Solutions



New Reimbursement Model Rocks Home Health Sector

A new reimbursement model has put pressure on home care agency operations. It’s the most significant change to Medicare’s home health payment structure in 20 years. The Patient-Driven Groupings Model (PDGM) took effect in January and has dramatically changed home health reimbursement. It requires post-acute care leaders to morph their organizations into value-driven, patient-centered providers empowered to deliver quality care.

Education: Think Holistically

1. Offer multiple languages for descriptions and instructions

Manufacturer Tip: Consider regions and communities served that may speak and read languages other than English. For example – serve Minnesota patients? Today there are more than 66,000 Hmong living in the state with the Twin Cities metro area home to the largest concentration of Hmong in the U.S.



2. Introduce the patient to a product in a trusted setting, such as a doctor’s office
3. Make product reviews easy to find and access by offering direct links via marketing
4. Educate payers about hidden costs in getting the product to the patient (gas, shipping)
5. Train drivers to do a home scan for added value, rather than just dropping off products on the porch

Usability: Offer Convenience

1. Make it intuitive and easy to assemble, understanding that the home care patient is not a trained, medical professional
2. Offer use information directly on the product or packaging so the patient doesn’t have to find (and potentially lose) separate paper instructions

Manufacturer Tip: Include QR codes or website addresses empowering the patient to access more detailed information



3. Use icons and other easy-to-understand visual cues
4. Consider whether to invest in online chatbots to give patients or family members instant answers
5. Create a Frequently Asked Questions resource that includes who and how to contact for troubleshooting. [EB](#)



Participating Companies

3M Health Care
Abbott Nutrition
Acentus
American Association for Homecare
BD
Bonafide Medical Group, LLC.
Brightree
Brown & Fortunato
Byram Healthcare
Cardinal Health
Coloplast Corp.
Concordance Healthcare Solutions
ConvaTec
Dale Medical Products
Drive DeVilbiss Healthcare
Dukal
Essity HMS North America
First Quality Products
Gericare Medical Supply
Global Biomedical Technologies
Graham Medical

Graham-Field Health Products
GroveMed
Healiant Training Solutions
Hillrom
Hollister
Home Care Delivered
IMCO
IMCO Home Care
Joerns Healthcare
McKesson Medical-Surgical
Molnlycke Health Care
NDC, Inc.
Nestle Health Science
Professional Medical
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Spectrum Medical
Supreme Medical Fulfillment Systems
TIDI
TwinMed
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