



Friday, August 14, 2009

Mark Your Calendars for Sept. 15: NAHC to Host Unprecedented Third 'March on Washington' for 2009

Your Voice and Presence Again Needed in the Nation's Capitol

Health care reform continues to be a hot issue in Washington, D.C. and throughout the nation, and its outcome could have far-reaching implications for the future practice of hospice and home health care. In order for the voices of the home care and hospice community to be heard on pending proposals to cut these important benefits, the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) has scheduled a third — and unprecedented — March on Washington this year. **Mark your calendars for Tuesday, Sept. 15, and plan to join in as your colleagues visit each state's Senators and Representatives at their offices in the Nation's Capitol.**

As part of the 2009 Home Care & Hospice March on Washington and Law Symposium, NAHC hosted more than 400 home care and hospice professionals, who descended on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, March 24. Then in May, as part of its "50 Nurses from 50 States" effort, NAHC brought nurses from across the nation to Washington, D.C. to present testimony before a congressional listening session and participate in interviews by radio and TV news outlets. These events were highly successful, and advocates at both sounded a powerful call against deep cuts to home-based services. But the home care and hospice community needs your help again.

The House of Representatives has put forth a health care reform package that would impose nearly \$57 billion in cuts to home health and roughly \$10 billion in cuts to hospice services over the next 10 years. NAHC, its member agencies, and other stakeholders have continued to engage in an aggressive campaign to fight these harmful cuts. Early this year, NAHC dedicated significant resources to expanding its lobbying efforts; in addition to continuing efforts by the firm of Alston & Bird and the Breaux/Lott Group, NAHC engaged the lobbying firms of Patton Boggs and the Podesta Group on behalf of the home health community. In addition, NAHC enlisted the aid of renowned firms to expand grassroots activities, public relations, and research to secure support for our advocacy positions.

This formidable team of NAHC in-house and outside lobbyists, researchers, and grassroots activists has tirelessly argued on Capitol Hill against the proposed cuts that could decimate the industry. Nearly 100,000 messages have been sent to Congress through NAHC's Legislative Action Network (LAN) alone. All together, a strong, consistent, and unified message has been conveyed to Senators and Representatives in all states, emphasizing that home care is a solution to be embraced in health care reform — rather than forced off the map.

Even with these multiple, ongoing efforts, it is imperative that *every* effort be made to ensure that our message continues to be heard. The fact that the House and Senate still have several weeks of deliberation left ahead on health reform provides an additional opportunity for members of the home care and hospice community to deliver this message directly to them and members of their staffs. Please plan on participating in this important March on Washington, and watch for further details in future issues of *NAHC Report* and on the NAHC member listservs.