

## Sixth Edition, July, 2006

Welcome to the sixth edition of **Marra's Homecare** Newsletter.

Summer, it's finally getting hot in the North Country (maybe too hot)



Wish the grass

wouldn't grow so fast

### UPDATE

## LEGISLATOR INTRODUCES BILL TO REPEAL OXYGEN CAP

**WASHINGTON** - Joe Schwartz, a republican congressman and medical doctor from Michigan, introduced a bill that would repeal the 36 - month cap on Medicare oxygen reimbursement that was passed earlier this year as part of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA). The bill would also restore ownership of oxygen equipment to providers. The DRA requires providers to transfer title of the oxygen equipment to beneficiaries after three years.

Cosponsors of H.R. 5513, the Home Oxygen Patient Protection Act, include another doctor, Rep. Tom Price, R - Ga., and four representatives from Ohio: Ralph Regula, Patrick Tiberi, David Hobson and Tim Ryan. The oxygen cap has raised numerous patient - safety issues and **AAHomecare** and other patient provider stakeholder groups including **Marra's Homecare** have vigorously opposed the changes. The chief worry: How will beneficiaries maintain the equipment following the 36 - month cap?

"This bill can help a million Americans breathe easier," said Tom Ryan, chairman of **AAHomecare**, in a release. The association urges all homecare providers, patients and their families to urge members of Congress to co-sponsor and pass this extremely important bill." **AAHomecare** met with Schwartz to discuss the bill.

In its release, the association acknowledged the efforts of Jackson, Mich. - based Great Lakes Home Health and Hospice and its CEO William Deary, in getting the bill introduced.

"As a physician, Congressman Schwarz brings to the Hill a unique and important perspective regarding the challenges of both patients and healthcare providers, especially with regard to intelligent and pragmatic regulatory reform," Deary said in the release.

Oxygen therapy is critical to approximately one million Americans who suffer from respiratory illnesses such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and who require oxygen therapy under Medicare. Nationwide, as many as 15 million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD, which is a growing disease. It is a slowly progressive, incurable disease that causes irreversible loss of lung function. Though existing medications have not proven beneficial in reversing its effects, home oxygen therapy-when properly prescribed and maintained-can slow or stop lung degeneration.

Medical oxygen is a federal legend drug and the devices are prescription only. Transferring the burden of maintenance and repair of sophisticated oxygen technologies to the beneficiary presents serious risks to patient safety and care. Medical oxygen therapy at home costs an average of \$2,400 per *year* under Medicare, about half the cost of an average single *day* in the hospital under Medicare.

## **Please Cosponsor H.R. 5513, The Home Oxygen Patient Protection Act**

As you may know, the federal budget bill passed by Congress earlier this year (the Deficit Reduction Act) will force oxygen users to assume ownership and responsibility for their oxygen equipment after 36 months of rental, under Medicare.

Because of potential risks related to improper use of oxygen, the American Lung Association and other organizations opposed this change in Medicare policy. We agree. Medical oxygen requires a physician's prescription. Oxygen equipment requires strict adherence to FDA regulations as well as manufacturer service and maintenance requirements.

Therefore, we urge you to support H.R. 5513, the Home Oxygen Patient Protection Act. This bill that will change Medicare oxygen policy to the way it was before the Deficit Reduction Act was signed into law. It was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by members of Congress from both parties, including two medical doctors currently serving in the House - Congressman Joe Schwarz of Michigan and Congressman Tom Price of Georgia.

We understand the need to control spending in Medicare. But the change in oxygen policy passed earlier this year will not save Medicare money.

We ask you to **call the U.S. House of Representatives and ask your Member of Congress to please cosponsor H.R. 5513, the Home Oxygen Patient Protection Act.** A call or letter from you at any time will be very helpful. But on June 20, homecare providers will be meeting with Members of Congress in Washington to discuss this issue, so a call on June 19 or 20 will help us make a strong case for preserving sensible oxygen policy in Medicare.

The switch board number at the U.S. Capitol is 202-224-3121. You can look up your Member of Congress and at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) or at [www.aahomecare.org](http://www.aahomecare.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Marra's Homecare**



J.C.A.H.O. Accredited

## **NEWS FLASH GRAND OPENING**

The third location of **Marra's Homecare** is now open  
24 Market Street Potsdam N.Y.



Stop in and see the newest innovations in

**Home Medical Equipment**

\*Sleep Therapy Products \*Oxygen Therapy

\*Rehabilitation Products \*Mobility

**OPEN HOUSE**

Wednesday September 27th

**3 P.M. To 6 P.M.**

**Refreshments Provided**

**To all of our patients & customers in St. Lawrence County**

**Come see us**

## **EMPLOYEE HIGH - LIGHTS:**

The management of **Marra's Homecare** would like to welcome aboard the following new employees:

Wayne Winters (New Potsdam Store)

Rhonda Monroe (Customer Service Watertown Main Office)

Gail Lambert (Customer Service Watertown Main Office)

Shaun Rener (Driver Tec. Watertown Main Office)

Robert Laplaca (Driver Tec. Watertown Main Office)

Chris McCarthy (Respiratory therapist Watertown Main Office)

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO MARY & JIM**

**JUNE 17**

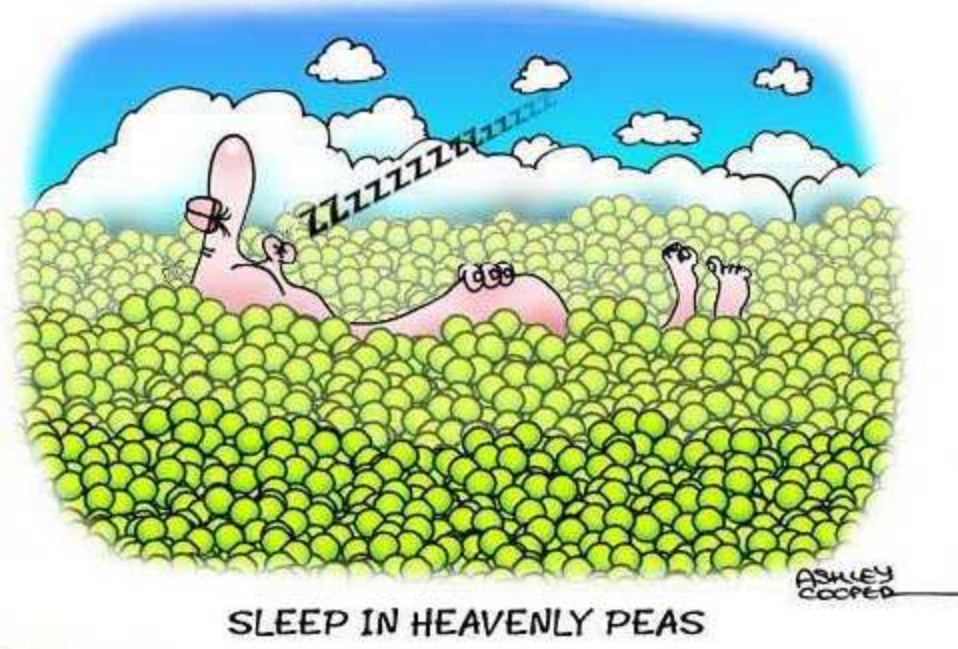


**2006**

## **WISHING YOU BOTH THE BEST**

A special **THANK YOU** to Jeff VanBrocklyn for your five years of service to **Marra's Homecare** We wish you good luck in all you do

## **BITS'N PIECES:**



## **MEMORABLE QUOTES:**

A father brought his son into the doctor because the boy had a matchbox car shoved up his nose. All the while the doctor was trying to remove the car, the father kept saying "I don't know how he did it!" Finally the doctor removed the car, and the father and son left.

A few hours later, the father came back with the matchbox car shoved up HIS nose. He told the doctor, "I know how he did it!"