



Home Infusion Delivery:
5 Steps to become
a leading referral source
for specialty pharmacies





Introduction

The home infusion industry is thriving, spurred by an aging population and an increasing shift to care for patients outside of traditional clinical settings. New regulations aimed at providing easier access to these services have also [contributed toward the growth](#) of home care infusion services, such as increased Medicare and Medicaid coverage, all with the goal of increasing access to home infusion drugs.

This growth is projected to continue well into the future. Now more than ever, it's imperative for nursing agencies to stay competitive to keep pace with the increased demand – and in turn, achieve successful growth.

“If you are an existing home infusion nursing agency looking to grow your business, or are considering starting an infusion nursing agency, this guide will help you differentiate yourself from the hundreds of infusion subcontractors today, and will provide meaningful insight for how to scale your business.”

– Sean Hill, Director, Infusion Sales, AlayaCare

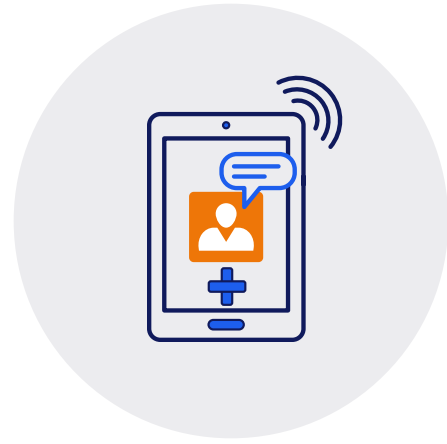
Streamlined communication and organized information, in the hands of both pharmacies and their subcontracting nursing agencies, is a major factor when it comes to creating and maintaining healthy partnerships between subcontractors and pharmacies.

With that in mind, here are 5 steps that nursing agencies can take to becoming a leading referral source from specialty pharmacies:

\$21.6 Billion

Projected U.S. home infusion therapy market by 2028





1. Leverage technology to connect better and discover new efficiencies

When choosing the right technology solutions, it's important to focus on those that make interactions between specialty pharmacies and nursing agencies as streamlined as possible. Cooperation should be easy and seamless. Making choices that reduce clerical strain not just on your own agency, but with partnered pharmacies as well, is simply invaluable in positioning yourself as a preferred subcontractor.

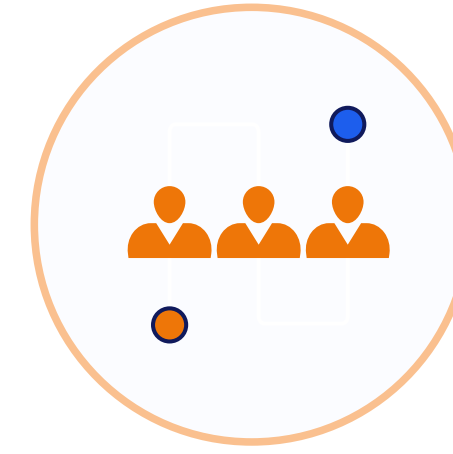
The first, and most important, step here is to build a comprehensive library of pharmacy forms. In doing so, you demonstrate you are a viable candidate for providing service for anyone's clients. At AlayaCare, for instance, our software is designed with this in mind, enabling users to construct a library of

specialty forms even if those pharmacies aren't users of our service. But you can go further than just being prepared: put the forms directly in the hands of your nurses. Systems like ours allow nurses to chart on the actual version of the pharmacy's forms (as well as customized notes and build the level of details needed right into the system). By doing this, your infusion providers save time on paperwork and reduce the workload of your partnered pharmacies. Having documents that update in real time ensures that schedules are being met, patients are being cared for, and notes are being documented with full pharmacy visibility to assist with drug orders and improved quality of care.

It can be tempting to try a do-it-yourself solution to accomplish this by finding hodge-podge workarounds. But trying to cobble something together, for example with Google Sheets, is not only inefficient but also unsustainable over the long term, particularly if you're looking to scale.

Key here is to find a technology partner that considers specific infusion capabilities in its software. That way your nurses are able to spend more time working with clients, and specialized pharmacies spend less administration time on their end.





2. Build an efficient referral program

The goal when establishing a referral program is to generate frictionless cooperation between subcontracting nursing agencies and specialty pharmacies. The most important elements here are being as responsive as possible in a timely manner, and having sophisticated scheduling tools in place.

Modern software systems offer the opportunity for a level of responsiveness that gets noticed. With increased access to information, like maps and travel times that make scheduling a breeze, you can take the initiative and respond to referrals in a timely manner – not only accepting them, but setting them immediately in motion.

Work out a system that allows you to respond as quickly as possible and ensure that you have a comprehensive scheduling

solution that lets you schedule infusion care early in order to meet the needs of your partnered pharmacies and their clients. Being decisive is important: your scheduling system should allow you to determine which nurses are the best fit, who has the expertise needed, and when they are available to deliver the home visit. In turn, such information can flow quickly straight back to the pharmacy, confirming your ability to serve the referral swiftly.

Whether you have a handful, or dozens, or hundreds of nurses, managing this requires sophisticated tools capable of tracking availability, hours worked, and much more. Specialized pharmacies take notice when you're able to quickly communicate to them that not only are you available, but you've already found a nurse that is the right fit for their job.



3. Leverage real-time visibility to help improve client outcomes

It is of high value to set up your shop in a way that offers specialized pharmacies plenty of transparency – and, often, real-time visibility – into the home infusion sessions of their clients.

Across the industry, we've heard there can be considerable disconnect between pharmacies and nursing agencies once the referral gets sent out. Put your agency above the crowd by using systems that share real-time access back to pharmacies regarding client visits,

treatments, and health status. Clients have a spectrum of disease states and health concerns, and pharmacies are routinely in touch with doctors to discuss drug dosage levels and adverse reactions. To help deliver better outcomes, they need real-time information in order for the full health-care team to make collective decisions.

Real-time information lets all parties keep track of when visits are, and which

nurse is visiting. Look for software platforms that deliver such readily accessible data on scheduled appointment times, when appointments are completed, when drugs need to be re-ordered, and when it's time to ship them.

Software tools such as employee-finder can ensure the right nurse is selected for the right infusion service based on skills, availability, and travel time. And mobile apps ensure nurses

can easily upload real-time information back into the shared system.

Bottom line: changing communications to precise, real-time information is much more effective than relying on nurse estimates. By keeping pharmacies accurately informed and always in the loop, you'll boost more than just efficiency: you can forge a relationship of trust.



4. Broaden nursing skillsets

Infusion therapy can be complex, and often requires a range of speciality skillsets. As demand for the service grows, the need for nurses who can provide treatment for a broad spectrum of disorders – from growth hormone deficiencies to cystic fibrosis to heart failure – grows with it.

Specialty pharmacies can supply the therapeutics needed to care for patients, yet it can be difficult to find the best nursing fit to administer each distinct treatment. Effective, personalized care is a defining trait of the home infusion industry, so maximizing your expertise is critical.

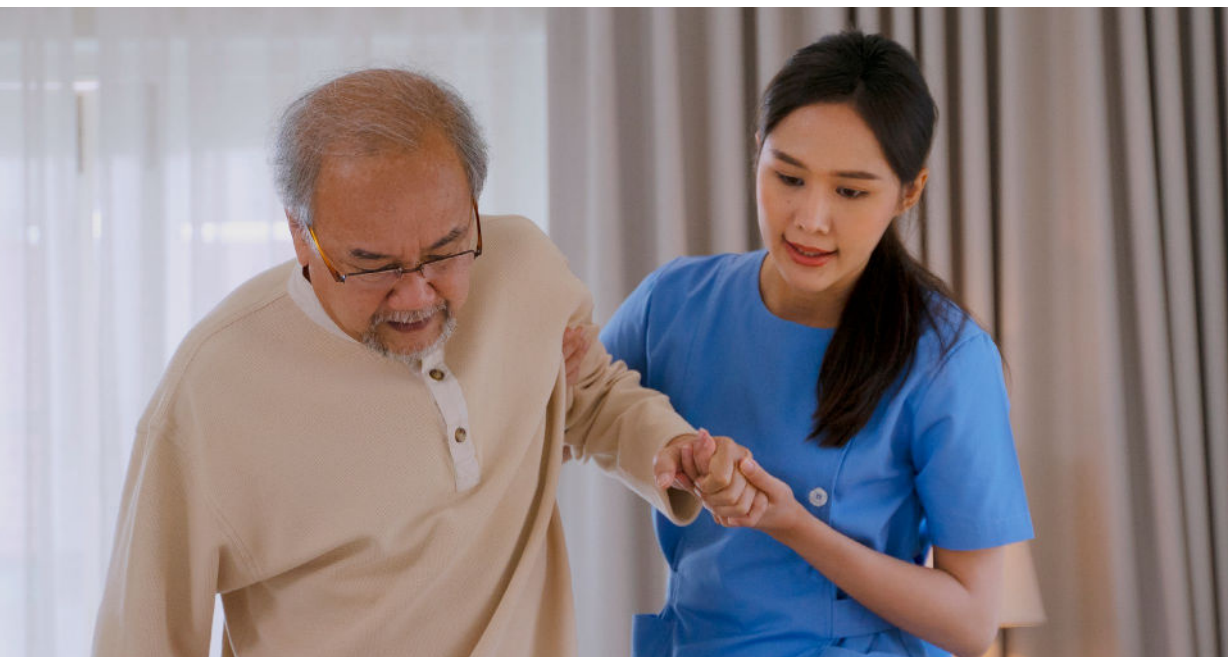
By employing nursing staff who together share a mix of skillsets – and showcasing this capacity – you will strengthen your position

in the industry. If a pharmacy is searching for partners and they can easily see that your agency has nurses trained in IVIG, Remicade, pump, pick, insertion, or more, then they save time having to investigate if you're the right choice. Even if your agency isn't on their radar yet, knowing what you specialize in will have them looking to you first when they do need what you can offer.

For agencies looking to scale into different regions, a strong consideration would be to extend yourself and hire nurses who are located in different states. We've heard from specialized pharmacies that they are certified to sell/ship their drugs to all states, but require a nurse with the right credentials to administer the treatment in certain regions. This is another key factor that sets you apart.



5. Tailor your marketing efforts



Our advice so far has leaned towards technological solutions, but sometimes there's nothing more effective than face-to-face meetings.

Specialty pharmacies are well represented at trade shows. So if you want to grow your business, be sure to take some time to walk around and introduce yourself. Let them know where you operate and what skillsets you offer.

You can also leverage your other connections at trade shows. For example, if your technology provider is present at the show, they might be able to do some marketing on your behalf, especially if they're already partnered with an existing specialty pharmacy and can help get you acquainted. Always be on the lookout for ways that you can stand out among other subcontracting nursing agencies. While it's important to connect with new sources, don't forget to stay top of mind with your existing referral sources too. Communicate with them beyond patients and referrals – make small gestures to forge meaningful professional connections by acknowledging their business with thank you cards, celebrating key milestones, and more.

A growing opportunity

The home infusion market is going to continue to expand, and forming effective partnerships is the key to staying relevant. All the major players are constantly on the lookout for strategic partnerships and making sure that you have systems in place to make growth and cooperation easier will keep your agency attractive (and keep your nurses where they belong: working with patients instead of struggling to keep up with paperwork!).

Set yourself up for success by finding efficiencies and minimizing growing pains with key strategies that can help you grow your business.





Lessons from a leader

Optioncare is one of the largest providers of infusion therapy in the U.S. Its nearly 3,000 infusion specialists care for more than 185,000 people a year across 50 states. Here are some of their insights into the factors they think are important when specialized pharmacies are selecting nursing agencies.



The inherent value of agencies is that they are licensed to provide home care in that state – which the specialty pharmacy itself is often not.



Being specialists in home infusion already differentiates you from more general home care agencies.



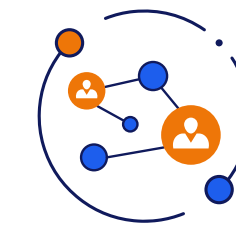
Being able to see clients for visits of any length, short or long visits, is invaluable.



It's beneficial if nurses are certified in areas beyond infusion (e.g. wound care) in order to help deliver comprehensive client care in a single visit.



The ability to respond to referrals quickly with experienced nurses ready and available is huge. Your efficiency levels ultimately flow back and affect the pharmacy's efficiency levels.



Once a pharmacy trusts you can take and manage a referral, they will return to you time and again.



Make sure your internal systems are very efficient in electronic billing, because the faster that process happens, the better for everyone.



There is a communication gap between pharmacies and agencies – so create seamless documentation that is shared.



Deploying a portal where pharmacies can log in, obtain clinical notes and other information, would be of distinct value. Pharmacies are constantly seeking information sooner, often dealing with considerable lag time.



About AlayaCare

AlayaCare is the proud provider of revolutionary cloud-based home health care software. It is our mission to give care providers the tools they need to achieve better health outcomes by helping to streamline their workflow so that they can focus on what's truly important. With a team of dedicated experts working to change the home health care industry for the better, our clients count on us to offer personalized software and expertise that will result in better outcomes and a stable path into the future.

alayacare.com