

Written by Rob Brant
Wednesday, 23 December 2009 00:00

Dear Members,

As we approach the end of the year, we at AMEPA have been reflecting upon the past year, all we have accomplished and all we still need to do. This has been an exciting year for us. We testified to a Congressional Subcommittee through our President Robert Brant, we hosted a successful statewide conference, we have been to Washington 5 times to advocate for legislation to repeal competitive bidding, we helped create and manage two state associations FAHCS and TAHCS, and working with them and all of our members we were able to initiate the bill HR 3790. We are pleased to report that through our efforts and those of AAHomecare, VGM and other state and national organizations there are officially 118 co-sponsors and several others who have committed to sign during the current recess.

Through the financial support and commitment of our members and sponsors we have become a more effective and ever more important advocacy group.

There are many people to thank for our success, especially our Senior Advisor, Sean Schwinghammer. There are also many unsung heroes whose efforts are too numerous for us to give them full credit. We thank you all and ask you to continue your efforts.

One year ago, in an attempt to give credit where it is due, the Board of AMEPA created the Outstanding Advocate Award. The first award was given to Robert Arado of Caremed Respiratory Services, a consummate advocate for our industry and friend to all providers. His efforts to support our industry and unite providers were a precursor to AMEPA. He helped with the foundation of AMEPA and his efforts influenced the creation of FAHCS and TAHCS. Unfortunately Robert passed away unexpectedly in October 2008 and the planned award was renamed in his honor.

AMEPA's Robert Arado Outstanding Advocate Award is for the Home Medical Equipment provider who has truly made a difference for the survival of the HME industry through personal commitment. There is a big difference between talking about the survival of the industry for the

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betterment of patients and the community, and making a financial and personal commitment to achieve those goals.

This year the Robert Arado Outstanding Advocate Award is given to John Mieras from Advanced Medical Support in Palm Beach Gardens, FL.

John is a Diabetic provider who has gone above and beyond in all aspects of support for our industry. John Mieras voluntarily serves on the AA Homecare Supply Council. This past year he has attended three events for Congressman Meek, two in South Florida and one in Central Florida. He has also recently visited Congressman Tom Rooney, representing AMEPA and FAHCS.

John attended the AA Homecare Annual Conference in Washington D.C., advocating in the Halls of the Congress on our behalf and he attended the AMEPA / FAHCS Conference in Orlando in May and the FAHCS conference in September in Fort Lauderdale. John has provided valuable information to FAHCS to assist in the successful effort to delay and stall the implementation of the Agency for Health Care Administration's plan to no longer allow HME providers to bill Medicaid for Diabetic supplies.

Each of the efforts listed above was a sacrifice of money and time, but John Mieras has never wavered when called upon to do his part, especially this year. If everyone was as active as John Mieras, we would be able to solve all of the industry's woes in a few days, rather than years. We truly appreciate his great efforts on behalf of the industry and we thank him.

Congratulation to John Mieras, winner of the 2009 Robert Arado Outstanding Advocate Award.

Happy Holidays and all the best to you and your family in 2010