

# HomeCare Monday

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## **Excerpt from: Looking for 'Next Steps' at Medtrade Spring**

LAS VEGAS—Innovation will be alive and well in Las Vegas as Medtrade Spring opens its doors tomorrow through Thursday (May 11-13) at the Sands Expo & Convention Center. And while attendees will be walking the aisles looking for the products they believe can succeed in changing the HME marketplace, several will also be bringing their own bright ideas.

Andy Simmons Jr. will be attending the show as an HME provider—and also as an exhibitor. As vice president of field operations for Cornerstone Medical with nine locations in Georgia, Alabama and Florida, Simmons has been going to Medtrade Spring for at least 15 years. “We are big fans of the education process; we know there is a lot out there information-wise for us to learn, and this show provides a platform,” he said. “We go out and meet all the vendors, look at new services and consider ways to make our company more efficient and profitable.”

Many HME providers will come to the show seeking tools to position themselves for competitive bidding, said Simmons. The industry is changing, and providers will be looking to change, too. “Look at us; we have been in the industry for over 22 years and we have to change, to do something different than we have been doing,” he said.

For Simmons and his father Andrew Simmons, change has come with the launch of a new company, **PAP Supply**, that subcontracts with home care companies to replenish supplies for their PAP customers. **PAP Supply** communicates on behalf of the provider through person-to-patient calls to help increase compliance and fulfill ongoing supply needs. “We do it on behalf of the HME provider, as their representative,” said Simmons. “This is not automated, this is a real person making the call.”

“We had been doing this for ourselves for a couple of years, and we saw it was a good model we could roll out to other providers,” Simmons added. “We developed the process and software program. It’s a ‘win-win’ for patients and the home care companies.”

“We can also relay any additional issues the customer might be having back to the provider,” Simmons said. “The unique thing is that since we developed this for our own company ... we understand the care of patients, so when we are talking to a company’s customers we have the knowledge and expertise to troubleshoot a number of issues over the phone, but at a minimum we can forward the call on for attention, which saves time and creates efficiencies.”

In addition, he continued, “Once supply orders are approved, we ship all the supplies from our location, so there is no need for the provider to keep an inventory. The provider bills the clients and pays us a fee for our service.”

According to Andrew Simmons, “With the challenges we are facing in this environment with the economy and CMS, people are looking for ways to capture some lost revenues, and they are looking at areas they haven’t developed. One of those is in the sleep area, where you have patients who need to have their supplies replaced on a regular basis. There are opportunities there for providing better care for patients and helping to keep them in compliance, and for developing the revenues that can be achieved through that process.”

But it’s a complex matter “to navigate through all of the issues in doing that,” said Andy Simmons. “It can be challenging for a home care company to be able to staff this specific niche. Often personnel are doing multiple things, and this is one of those areas that can get pushed to the side ... when companies outsource to us, we manage the whole process. We will mine the existing revenue that a company already has within their doors and capitalize on that piece that they may not have been able to capture properly. This can put sales and revenues on the table that wasn’t there before.”