

Policies to Support Older Americans

Biological Medications & Infusion

There are more than 40 million older patients in America, and policymakers have a responsibility to ensure these patients have access to the right care. Supporting patients and treating their conditions effectively means ensuring that they have access to the most effective treatment in a timely manner.

While there are many treatment options available, some may be less familiar than others. Targeted medications today often take the form of biologics, infused or injected drugs developed from tissue or living systems. There are three kinds of biologics: innovator biologics, biosimilars and interchangeable biosimilars. They are all safe and effective treatment options.

Policymakers may have questions about biological medications and how these treatments can support older patients. Knowing the answers can inform their decision making and how they craft policies.



What conditions do biological medications treat?

There are biologics available to treat a variety of conditions. These medications can support patients with:

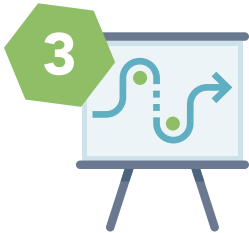
- Arthritis
- Digestive Disorders
- Asthma
- Gout
- Cancer
- Neurological Disorders
- Diabetes
- And Other Conditions

Biological medications are often used for patients with chronic conditions or patients who struggle taking medication orally. They can be more efficient than other treatments, as the medication is delivered directly to the bloodstream.



How do infusions work?

In many cases, biologics are infused. Instead of taking the medication orally, these treatments are administered through an IV. Infusions occur in a variety of environments, such as a clinician's office, an infusion center or the patient's home, and they typically last for a few hours.



What challenges do patients face?

There are several barriers that make it difficult for older patients to access biological medications.

- **Hesitancy.** Many patients are unfamiliar with how infusions work. Providers may choose a different treatment option as a result.
- **Access to infusion centers.** There may not be any infusion centers near patients where they can regularly receive treatment.
- **Transportation.** A lack of easy transportation to and from infusion centers can make it harder for patients to receive these treatments.
- **Education.** Educational resources about biologics are often designed for providers, not patients, and can be challenging to understand.
- **Insurance coverage.** Coverage of biological medications is also limited, especially for home infusions.



What policies can improve access to infusions?

Policies should expand access for infusion treatment and increase the number of places that patients can receive infusions. For many older patients, transportation to and from care centers presents a major challenge.

Home infusion and in-office infusion provide valuable options for patients. Deciding where a patient should receive an infusion is an important step in overcoming access barriers, and the right choice can tackle transportation challenges and ease a patient's concerns or discomfort. Patients and providers should be free to make decisions about where patients receive infusions based on their condition, needs and preferences.

Older patients deserve high-quality care, and biological medications provide valuable treatment options. Ensuring that patients have access to the right treatment will pave the way for patient-centered care that improves patients' lives.