Back in the day (meaning 25 or so years ago), pediatricians frequently used home phototherapy to treat low-risk newborns for hyperbilirubinemia. Guidelines recommended that home phototherapy be used for term babies without hemolytic disease. It was a cost-effective and family friendly alternative to hospital admission for phototherapy because, back then, home phototherapy cost about $100 per day compared with $1,000 or more per day for the same service provided in the hospital setting. (continued on Pg. 2)
Unfortunately, low reimbursement by insurance companies eventually made it cost prohibitive for durable medical equipment companies to provide this service, and the lights gradually went out on home phototherapy.

I am very pleased that Physician Engineered Products has just introduced their new disposable home therapy system called Bright Embrace. This is a wraparound phototherapy system that uses light-emitting diode (LED) lights to provide high levels of irradiance in the 430 nm to 490 nm (blue) band (30 µW/cm²/nm or higher) delivered to as much of the infant’s surface area as possible. Bright Embrace meets the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2011 revised policy on the management of newborn hyperbilirubinemia.²

The device operates for 60 hours, usually sufficient for providing a full course of high-intensity phototherapy for an infant. It sells for $250 per unit, and pediatricians can sell the unit to parents either at cost or at a reasonable markup to cover office expenses. This is particularly useful in our current economy, because many parents have high insurance deductibles, and the cost of 2 days of hospitalization could easily exceed $4,000.

Included with the Bright Embrace system is a new see-through goggle system that protects baby’s eyes from the high-intensity light. Welcome back home phototherapy—we missed you!