NHPCO NewsBriefs  February 19, 2015

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COMPLIANCE AND REGULATORY

Palmetto Increases Focus on General Inpatient Care… This week, Palmetto GBA, one of the three Home Health and Hospice Medicare Administrative Contractors, released several important references on hospice care at the General Inpatient level of care. Watch the five minute YouTube educational video by Charles Canaan, PGBA representative, where he describes the factors to take into account when determining that GIP is the right level of care. The hospice workshop series handout also spends a great deal of time on GIP and how the claims data analysis has “shown a light” on the use of GIP, particularly in hospice inpatient facilities. Palmetto also reports that GIP “not reasonable and necessary” is the second most common reason for Palmetto hospice denials. With the continuing focus on GIP by the Office of Inspector General and others, this information is especially important for Palmetto hospice providers.

NGS Current Medical Review Edits Announced… During a recent POE Advisory Group call, NGS announced the following medical review edits:

• Provider specific probes and audits
  o Increase in utilization compared to prior year
  o Annual percent change in reimbursement of greater than 30%
  o Length of stay greater than 180 days

• Wide spread probes
  o 5WPGG (Wisconsin) & 5CPCC (California)
  o DX group 262: Other severe protein-calorie malnutrition
  o DX group 263: Other and unspecified protein-calorie malnutrition
CMS Extends Final Overpayment Rule Publication… As of February 17, 2015, CMS extends by one year the timeline for publication of a final rule concerning policies and procedures for reporting and returning overpayments to the Medicare program for providers and suppliers of services under Parts A and B.

Survey Readiness Compliance Tip of the Week! Read this week’s compliance tip about pre-survey self-assessment on our survey readiness webpage.

QUALITY REPORTING

New HIS Q&A Available… The latest Q&A and Quarterly Update document for the Hospice Item Set is now available on the HIS website. Questions addressed include when HIS results will be available, and clarification of HIS reporting requirements for patients who die prior to completion of a comprehensive assessment, among others. A recap of information from the previous quarter and information on what to expect in the coming quarter are included as well.

The new Q & A and Quarterly Update document is also available on the Quality Reporting page of the NHPCO website.

Technical Expert Panel… CMS is forming a Technical Expert Panel as part of the current Hospice Quality Reporting Program Measure Development, Maintenance, and Support project. The purpose of this project is to determine additional quality measures that hospices will be required to submit to CMS. TEP members will provide input throughout the measure development, implementation, and refinement process. This will span the duration of the project through September 2018.

A call for TEP has been posted on the CMS TEP nominations website. Additional detail on the project and TEP participation can be found on there as well.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Virtual Event Reaches 48 States… NHPCO’s two-day Virtual Event, “Creating the Future of Palliative Care,” began with a plenary presentation by Russell Portenoy, MD, executive director of the MJHS Institute for Innovation in Palliative Care. The second day began with a presentation by Joan Harrold, MD, MPH, FACP, FAAHPM, of Hospice & Community Care in Lancaster. More than 325 organizations hosted the event for 1,150 professionals in just about every state in the country, including Alaska and Hawaii.

ACCESS AND OUTREACH

We Honor Veterans and VA Renews their Collaboration… The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and NHPCO continue their shared commitment for the landmark “We Honor Veterans” program. Learn more about the renewed commitment.

New ChiPPS Quarterly E-Journal Available… Learn more about pediatric hospice and palliative care through the ChiPPS E-Journal. Download the new edition of the ChiPPS E-Journal which offers a collection of articles that explore selected issues in advance planning in pediatric hospice and palliative care. Sign up to receive the quarterly ChiPPS E-Journal and access archive issues at nhpc.org/pediatrics.

NOTES FROM NHPCO

Collaboration Announced to Create New Palliative Care Resources… At the opening on NHPCO’s Virtual Event, “Creating the Future of Palliative Care,” a new collaboration between NHPCO and the MJHS Institute for Innovation in Palliative Care was announced. The two organizations will work together to provide enhanced clinical education focused on community-based palliative care designed for palliative care clinicians. These new offerings will be online resources and should be available in fall of 2015. Read the NHPCO press release online.
"We Honor Veterans gives dignity to vets at the end of life," KERO Channel 23, ABC affiliate in Bakersfield, 02/09/15.

"Study identifies eight signs associated with impending death in cancer patients," MD Anderson press release, 02/08/15.

"I'm a palliative care doctor. This is what I do," KevinMD.com, 02/01/15.