TOP STORY

MedPAC Releases March Report to Congress
The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission released its annual March report to Congress on Wednesday. The report notes that more than 1.38 million Medicare beneficiaries received hospice care in 2015, an increase over 2014. MedPAC projects the aggregate hospice margin in 2017 to be 7.7 percent. In the report, the Commission recommends that “Congress should eliminate the update to the hospice payment rates for fiscal year 2018,” which is consistent with previous MedPAC recommendations. It is important to remember that Congress must take action for a MedPAC recommendation to be implemented, which it has not done in recent years. Learn more about the hospice chapter from the Hospice Action Network.

COMPLIANCE AND REGULATORY

Performant Recovery Offers Webinar to Palmetto Providers
Palmetto GBA, Medicare Administrative Contractor Jurisdiction M, is partnering with Performant Recovery, the new CMS National Region 5 Recovery Audit Contractor for a special outreach training session. Its purpose is to provide the JM Home Health and Hospice providers an opportunity to meet the Performant RAC team and to gain knowledge about the implementation of this new national RAC contract. This Webcast will be held from 2:00 to 3:30pm ET on Thursday, March 23, 2017. Register for the Palmetto event online.

Update on Social Security Number Removal Initiative
Updated Social Security Number Removal Initiative Home and Provider webpages will help you prepare to transition to Medicare Beneficiary Identifiers next year. Find new information including:
How to identify railroad retirement board beneficiaries
Coordination of benefits with other payers
Where to direct your patients to correct their addresses so they receive new Medicare cards

OIG Telephone Spoofing Scam
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General recently confirmed that the HHS OIG Hotline telephone number is being used as part of a telephone spoofing scam targeting individuals throughout the country. These scammers represent themselves as HHS OIG Hotline employees and use various tactics to obtain or verify the victim’s personal information, which can then be used for fraudulent activity. More information is available on the OIG Consumer Alerts webpage.

New GIP Claims Audit Alert
NHPCO issued a Regulatory Alert on 03/13/17 about a new GIP Claims Audit from CMS. CMS has contracted with StrategicHealthSolutions, LLC as a Supplemental Medical Review Contractor for a review of patient GIP stays. Approximately 65 hospices are a part of the audit. NHPCO reached out to CMS Center for Program Integrity and provides more details on the audit, the audit process, and the process for discussion and education of the audit findings. Read the NHPCO Alert.

QUALITY REPORTING
NHPCO Podcast: Hospice Quality Reporting...Ready, Set, Go
Quality has long been about what you "should" be doing but now we've moved into an era of what you "have" to be doing. The most immediate quality requirements must be in place in less than a month. Hear NHPCO staff discuss these upcoming requirements and learn how you can get prepared in our newest Podcast episode, "Hospice Quality Reporting...Ready, Set Go."

Registration Open for Hospice Quality Reporting Webinar
CMS is hosting a webinar for hospice providers on Hospice Quality Reporting Program Data Submission and Reporting on Tuesday, April 25, from 2:00 to 3:45pm ET. Visit the Hospice Quality Reporting Training webpage for more information and to register.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION
Spring NewsLine is Online
Don’t miss the new edition of NHPCO’s award-winning quarterly, NewsLine. Articles explore ways to address gaps in palliative care, ethics related to drug diversion, the value of medical director certification, news from the field and much more. Read NewsLine online.

How are You Handling Inclusion and Access in Your Organization?
NHPCO’s E-OL offerings have you covered. Hospice managers play a key role in their organization’s practices regarding inclusion and access. Learn how to become more aware and attuned to the importance of inclusion and access, and gain resources to help you influence the development of an inclusive organization in this E-OL online course Inclusion and Access: The Manager’s Role. Hospice staff provides care and work to influence diverse populations in their work every day. Learn specific strategies, innovative program models and engagement tools to assist your efforts in reaching out to Latinos in your community in this E-OL online course Innovative Strategies for Engaging Your Latino Community. Access all our E-OL course offerings.

NOTES FROM NHPCO
National Volunteer Week Resources
Celebrating our dedicated volunteers during National Volunteer Week, April 23-29, 2017, is a wonderful opportunity to shine a light on all that volunteers do. Members will find resources for Volunteer Week that includes ad slicks, social media graphics, document templates and more.
Call for Proposals Technical Glitch
The Call for Proposals for NHPCO’s 2017 Interdisciplinary Conference has been extended to March 19, 2017. Unfortunately, there has been a technical problem accessing the online submission system that is a large global Internet issue. For those who tried to submit a proposal and were not able, please contact education@nhpco.org via email and we will provide a link to a web form that you can complete. We apologize for the inconvenience and encourage session submissions for this conference that will be in San Diego in September.

Upcoming NCHPP Chats
- **MedPAC Report Briefing** - Join us for a discussion of MedPAC’s March 15 report to Congress (see the Top Story above). Presenters will offer an analysis of live discharges, including which patient-initiated revocations and hospice-initiated live discharges, and much more. This chat is hosted by the NCHPP CEO/Executive Director Section and will be led by NHPCO’s Judi Lund Person. **March 21, 2017, 1:00pm ET**.
- **CMS Quality Measure Update** - The March QAPI Section chat will outline upcoming changes to CMS’ quality measure and their implications for hospice providers - in particular, quality staff who are designated to submit data to CMS. **March 23, 2017, 3:00 - 4:00pm ET**. (Learn more about the changes in [NHPCO’s Regulatory Alert](#).)

In Case You Missed It – Chat Recordings on MyNHPCO
- **How to Share Your Stories: Merging Fundraising and Human Interest** - March 9 Development/PR/Marketing chat recording.
- **Building Diverse Volunteer Programs** - March 9 - Volunteer/Volunteer Management chat recording.

Check out the full chat schedule on MyNHPCO

OTHER NEWS AND NOTES

Final Deadline for 2017 HMDCB Exam Cycle
The value of having your physicians certified is featured in “Recognizing the Special Skillset of the Hospice Medical Director,” in the latest issue of NHPCO’s NewsLine. With that in mind, the final deadline for physicians to apply for the Hospice Medical Director Certification Board’s 2017 exam cycle is Tuesday, March 21. Physicians should visit HMDCB.org/apply. Physicians who attended the AAHPM Annual Assembly may waive the application late fee, a savings of $250; to take advantage of this offer, you must call HMDCB at 847-375-6740. Encourage your physicians to apply today.

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