Statement on the Use of the Family Evaluation of Care (FEHC) Quarterly Results

The Family Evaluation of Hospice Care (FEHC) survey is the most widely used tool for measuring and tracking the quality of hospice care being provided to patients and families. During development, the survey was tested and validated for consistency and accuracy in capturing the perception of quality of care delivery from the bereaved family’s perspective. With nearly a decade of use by the hospice community, the FEHC tool has proven itself invaluable for identifying, assessing, and tracking indicators of quality of hospice care and setting performance improvement priorities.

In 2011 NHPCO updated the quarterly reports provided to hospices participating in FEHC program. Drawing on almost a decade of experience and data, and consistent with the validation of the tool, comparative statistics and ordered scores were included in the reports. These statistics are provided to add contextual value to an individual hospice’s results and to allow hospices to quickly identify priorities and set obtainable goals for quality improvement projects.

As valuable a tool as it is, the FEHC alone does not offer a full or conclusive indication of the caliber of excellence of any hospice. The results presented in the quarterly FEHC reports are provided by NHPCO for use in hospices’ Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI) programs. The comparative statistics and scores provided in the reports are relative to the performance of the pool of FEHC participants over a specified timeframe and consequently are subject to change from year to year and quarter to quarter. No standard has been set for any quality indicator score nor does attainment of a particular score convey any inference of recognition of achievement by NHPCO.

This means that FEHC results should not be interpreted or used as an indication of the superiority of one hospice in comparison to others. Neither can any notion of ranking or superiority, nor recognition of achievement on the part of NHPCO, be implied from attainment of a particular FEHC score at any given time.

For these reasons, NHPCO does not approve of the use of FEHC results in any statements or claims made by hospices indicating or implying superiority over other organizations. Nor will such statements or claims be supported or verified by NHPCO.

NHPCO is committed to providing hospices with a reliable system for receiving feedback and comparing their performance to nationally representative data as a means of ensuring quality of care. NHPCO is equally committed to ensuring that results from its performance measures are used correctly. The FEHC survey is a measurement tool that provides useful, meaningful, and actionable data for use performance improvement. FEHC results are intended for use by hospice in their QAPI programs – and should be limited to that use alone.