

Hospice and Palliative Care Resources for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 12/02/20

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links. Please note, these Updates are published when there is helpful news to share.

“If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.” — Napoleon Hill

Policy Update

HHS Clarifies that Provider Relief Funds May Be Used to Reimburse Lost Fundraising and Thrift Store Revenue

On November 17, [NHPCO sent a letter to HHS](#) requesting consideration for lost fundraising and thrift store revenue to be counted as lost revenue due to COVID-19, citing hospice-specific examples of losses due to cancelled fundraising events and thrift store closures, both sources of income to support patient care.

On December 2, 2020, [NHPCO received a letter from HHS](#) confirming that lost fundraising and thrift store revenue may qualify as reimbursable lost revenue. The letter states, in part:

Additionally, your letter inquired about using PRF [Provider Relief Fund] funds to reimburse lost fundraising and thrift store revenue. PRF funds may be used to reimburse lost revenue attributable to coronavirus, and lost fundraising and thrift store revenue may qualify as reimbursable lost revenue. To calculate lost revenues attributable to coronavirus, providers are required to report revenues received from Medicare, Medicaid, commercial insurance, and other sources for patient care services. Providers should report fundraising and thrift store revenue in 2019 and 2020 as a revenue source if it was raised to fund patient care services.

NHPCO will continue to work with HHS to ensure that the clarifications issued today are included in the ongoing guidance provided by HHS.

National Organizations Support Vaccine Access Recommendations

A coalition of the nation’s leading home care and hospice organizations [sent a letter](#) (12/01/20) supporting draft recommendations pending before the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) on the prioritization of vaccine access. Home care and hospice staff of all disciplines are included in the first group (Phase 1a) subject to access to the COVID-19 vaccine since the workforce is properly included in ACIP’s definition of health care workers. Read the combined organizations [press release](#) (12/01/20).

Provider Update

FDA Updates from December 1, 2020

- The FDA issued a [warning letter](#) jointly with the Federal Trade Commission to Avazo-Healthcare, LLC for selling adulterated and misbranded COVID-19 test kits and unapproved drug products with fraudulent COVID-19 claims. In addition to COVID-19 test kits, the company sells CBD products with misleading

claims that the products can mitigate, prevent, treat, diagnose, or cure COVID-19. The FDA requested that Avazo-Healthcare immediately stop selling these unapproved, uncleared and unauthorized test kits and unapproved products. Consumers concerned about COVID-19 should consult with their health care provider.

- The FDA has also posted the following warning letters for unapproved and misbranded products related to COVID-19: [ChromaDex](#); [Innovative Medicine LLC](#); [Red Moon Herbs](#); [Sage Woman Herbs, Ltd. dba Sage Consulting & Apothecary](#).

Guidance for Health Departments about COVID-19 Testing in the Community

On December 1, the CDC updated its summary of considerations and current CDC recommendations regarding COVID-19 testing strategies. Download [Guidance for Health Departments about COVID-19 Testing in the Community](#).

Resources

Strengths and Struggles for Families Involved in Hospice Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This qualitative study, published in the [Journal of Social Work in End of Life and Palliative Care](#), explored the impact of the pandemic on this population through the experiences and perceptions of social workers in hospice care. A survey was distributed through national and local listservs to social work practitioners throughout the United States between May 15 and June 15, 2020. The study was designed to learn the following: (1) Concerns patients experienced as a result of the pandemic, (2) strengths/resilience factors for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (3) the personal and professional impact of the pandemic on social workers.

Medical Home Visit Programs During COVID-19 State of Emergency

An article published by AJMC, "[Medical Home Visit Programs During COVID-19 State of Emergency](#)," reports that COVID-19 has increased pressure on end-of-life decision making. Patients and their families are increasingly opting for palliative care and hospice programming to avoid separation. Families are being forced to consider advance directives under an increased emotional strain as patients become "persons under investigation" for COVID-19. Technology has allowed for the provision of services through telehealth, and changes to policy by CMS have aided widespread implementation of telemedicine. We anticipate continuing to be nimble in the face of challenge and to provide timely and meaningful care for those who depend on our efforts.

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