

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



## NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 04/30/20

(Updated 05/01/20)

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links.

*“You are there for your community. NHPCO is there for you.”*

### Policy Updates

#### **Edo Banach at the White House**

This afternoon, as this Update goes out, NHPCO President and CEO Edo Banach is attending a White House briefing with President Donald Trump that is focusing on the care and needs of America’s seniors resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The President will be joined by Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Azar, Veterans Administration Secretary Wilkie, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Verma, FEMA Administrator Gaynor, and Ambassador Birx who is serving as the White House Coronavirus Coordinator. Look for [NHPCO’s press release](#) to come out later this afternoon following the event.

#### **NHPCO Posts FAQs for COVID-19 in Hospice**

With so many questions from hospice providers and so many different ways that CMS answers questions, NHPCO has put together a FAQ grid for hospices with the answers to commonly asked questions and the links to where the answers can be found. As more questions are asked and more answers are available, NHPCO will update the FAQ grid. This new, incredibly helpful resource is for NHPCO members only, find it on our [Members-only COVID-19 Resource page](#). *Helpful Hint: It is helpful if members are already logged onto the NHPCO website when they click on member-only pages.*

#### **CMS Issues New 1135 Blanket Waivers – New Waivers for Hospices**

Today, [CMS announced additional 1135 blanket waivers](#), including some new waivers for hospices. Changes are listed below. Hospices who have a hospice inpatient facility will want to check on specific waivers listed for inpatient facilities.

1. **Training and Assessment of Aides: (New since 4/21 Release)**

CMS is waiving the requirement at 42 CFR §418.76(h)(2) for Hospice and 42 CFR §484.80(h)(1)(iii) for HHAs, which require a registered nurse, or in the case of an HHA a registered nurse or other appropriate skilled professional (physical therapist/occupational therapist, speech language pathologist) to make an annual onsite supervisory visit (direct observation) for each aide that provides services on behalf of the agency. In accordance with section 1135(b)(5) of the Act, we are postponing completion of these visits.

All postponed onsite assessments must be completed by these professionals no later than 60 days after the expiration of the PHE.

2. **Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI): (New since 4/21 Release)**

CMS is modifying the requirement at 42 CFR §418.58 for Hospice and §484.65 for HHAs, which requires these providers to develop, implement, evaluate, and maintain an effective, ongoing, hospice/HHA-wide, data-driven QAPI program. Specifically, CMS is modifying the requirements at §418.58(a)–(d) and §484.65(a)–(d) to narrow the scope of the QAPI program to concentrate on infection control issues, while retaining the requirement that remaining activities should continue to focus on adverse events. This modification decreases burden associated with the development and maintenance of a broad-based QAPI program, allowing the providers to focus efforts on aspects of care delivery most closely associated with COVID-19 and tracking adverse events during the PHE. The requirement that HHAs and hospices maintain an effective, ongoing, agency-wide, data-driven quality assessment and performance improvement program will remain.

3. **Annual Training. (New since 4/21 Release)**

CMS is modifying the requirement at 42 CFR §418.100(g)(3), which requires hospices to annually assess the skills and competence of all individuals furnishing care and provide in-service training and education programs where required. Pursuant to section 1135(b)(5) of the Act, we are postponing the deadline for completing this requirement throughout the COVID-19 PHE until the end of the first full quarter after the declaration of the PHE concludes. This does not alter the minimum personnel requirements at 42 CFR §418.114. Selected hospice staff must complete training and have their competency evaluated in accordance with unwaived provisions of 42 CFR Part 418.

## **Provider Update**

### **CMS COVID-19: Home Health and Hospice Call — May 5, 2020**

The next CMS call is set for Tuesday, May 5 from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. ET. These calls provide targeted updates on the agency's latest COVID-19 guidance. Leaders in the field also share best practices. There is an opportunity to ask questions if time allows. To Participate:

- Conference lines are limited, so we encourage you to join via [audio webcast](#), either on your computer or smartphone web browser.
- Or call **833-614-0820**; Access Passcode: **7844154**.

## **Resources**

**CDC Billing Resource:** [ICD-10-CM Official Coding and Reporting Guidelines April 1, 2020 - Sept 30, 2020](#).

**EPA Resource:** [COVID-19 Disinfectant List](#).

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