

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 06/19/20

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

“Something good comes out of every crisis.” – Dave Pelzer

Policy Update

Telehealth Flexibilities Gaining Senate Support

Section 3706 of the CARES Act provided telehealth flexibility for hospices. Specifically, the change in law now allows hospices to conduct hospice recertifications including face-to-face visits using telehealth “during the emergency period.” [NHPCO has continued to work closely](#) with legislators and the administration to make sure that some of the flexibilities granted during the public health emergency continue afterward. The additional flexibility to conduct this administrative task of hospice recertification by telehealth has already made a direct impact on improving workforce shortage issues by allowing physicians and nurse practitioners to provide needed medical care to patients in addition to the face-to-face requirement. Yesterday, a bipartisan group of 30 senators [sent a letter](#) to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, asking that the telehealth flexibilities that were included in previous COVID-19 legislation be made permanent, so that patients can continue to receive care via telehealth in a post-pandemic world.

Small Business Administration (SBA) Releases Updated PPP Loan Forgiveness Application and Revised Interim Final Rule

The U.S. Small Business Administration (“SBA”) has released its updated Loan Forgiveness Application. Additionally, certain borrowers may qualify for the new Alternative Loan Forgiveness Application.

The Loan Forgiveness [Application](#) includes the following changes (instructions available [here](#)):

- Provides for an Alternative Payroll Covered Period, now a 24-week period.
- Clarifies that a position will not be included in the FTE calculation if the Borrower made a good-faith, written offer to rehire an employee who was employed on February 15, 2020 and was unable to hire similarly qualified employees for the unfilled position.
- Changes FTE documentation from the average number of FTEs per month to the average number of FTEs per week.
- Specifies that employer health insurance contributions on behalf of a self-employed individual, general partners, or owner-employees of an S-corporation should not be included in the health insurance expenditures calculation.
- Restricts retirement expenditures for self-employed individuals, general partners, or owner-employees of an S-corporation.

The Alternative Loan Forgiveness Application is a shortened forgiveness application for certain qualifying borrowers.

The SBA has also updated the interim final rule (“Rule”) implementing provisions of the Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020, which amended the CARES Act. The Rule encompasses provisions relating to the maturity of PPP loans, the deferral of PPP loan payments, and the forgiveness of PPP loans. The [interim final rule is available here](#).

Resources

Spanish version of Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for COVID-19

CDC released a [Spanish version](#) of existing page Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for COVID-19.

Toolkit on State Actions to Mitigate COVID-19 Prevalence in Nursing Homes

CMS updated their [toolkit on state actions to mitigate COVID-19 prevalence in nursing homes](#). This toolkit catalogs the many innovative solutions designed at the state level to protect our nation’s vulnerable nursing home residents.

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REMINDER: NHPCO’s COVID-19 Update is published on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday distribution, should there be helpful news and links to share on those days. Of course, if urgent news breaks, NHPCO will issue an Update as needed to assist the provider community.