NHPCO Project ECHO *Equity Where It Matters*

Key Takeaways
Advancing Equity in Serious Illness and End-of-Life Care: A Data Analysis
January 5, 2023

Key points:
- Language can be a significant barrier for non-native English Speakers, and specifically, more than half (52% of Hispanic respondents said they would need hospice workers who spoke their loved one's language to feel comfortable)
- The discussion around the need for hospice often occurs too late, making it a crisis decision for patients and families
- Cultural/Residential/Religious connection of hospice team to the patient is important and can build trust and also impact when and which hospice the patient and family choose
- Developing best-practices with interpreters is essential to ensure communication embodies qualities of care and compassion, which may include video interpreters and relevant print material.

Actionable Steps:
- Whenever possible, connect patients with hospice team members of similar backgrounds; intentionality is important to create an environment of trust and sustainable participation in the program
- Create written materials representative of a variety of languages and consistently offer language options upon admission. Assess patient and family preferences regarding language and utilize the language with which they are most comfortable.
- Establish transparency and clear communication regarding the organization's ability to consistently provide services in the patient and family's preferred language, while ensuring the interdisciplinary team is trained and competent in accessing appropriate language services.

Conversation Starters:
- How can my organization best build a hospice environment in which language barriers are dissipated through organizational support for non-native English speakers?
- To what extent can a patient's external support system (family, religious organization, cultural community, etc.) be included in the hospice plan to better support a patient's experience?

References:
- NHPCO Diversity Tools and Resources https://www.nhpco.org/education/tools-and-resources/diversity
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas
- Leave No One Behind: Equity and Access in Palliative Care https://wfrtds.org/report-on-access-to-palliative-care/
- CMS Framework for Health Equity https://www.cms.gov/about-cms/agency-information/omh/health-equity-programs/cms-framework-for-health-equity