



Tip: Log in to the [NHPCO website](#) first to easily access member-only links.

TOP STORY

STAR Survey Updates – Now Available!

The updated [2022 STAR National Report](#) and STAR Administrator [Dashboard User Guide](#) are now available to NHPCO members. The updated report includes additional response breakdowns by staff categories, providing members with greater detail and improved benchmarking opportunities. Members are encouraged to download both resources from the [NHPCO STAR webpage](#).

The 2023 STAR National Report will also be available for download in February 2024. Stay tuned for updates!

About STAR: The National STAR Report provides members with benchmarking data on workforce trends that allows them to compare their organizational staff satisfaction measures with nationwide performance data. For more information, including a recorded STAR National Report walkthrough session, members are encouraged to visit the [NHPCO STAR webpage](#) or reach out to star@nhpco.org for more information.



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 16: Workforce Chat – [Understanding and Battling Staff Burnout](#)

January 16: QAPI Chat – [Hospice Quality 101](#)

January 17: Volunteer Management Chat – [NHPCO & MyNHPCO Library and Resources Recap](#)

January 18: [We Honor Veterans Office Hours](#)

January 18: Quality and Regulatory Webinar Miniseries – [Navigating Regulatory Waters: Insights from the 2023 Hospice Audit Survey and Care Compare](#)

January 23: Finance/Information Systems Chat – [Hospices' Top Three Roadblocks to Transparent and Effective Communication](#)

January 24: Clinical and Operations Management Chat – [Increased Survey Activity and Readiness: How to Prepare and Manage the Various Types of Audits](#)

January 24: Social Work Chat – [Clinical Consultation and Supervision: Supporting Good Clinical Practice and Regulatory Compliance](#)

January 25: [Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group Meeting](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

NHPCO to Hold Regulatory and Quality Webinar on January 18

NHPCO will hold a webinar, "[Navigating Regulatory Waters: Insights from the 2023 Hospice Audit Survey and Care Compare](#)," on January 18, 2–3 p.m. ET to discuss key regulatory challenges and trends in hospice care to prepare for the upcoming year. Learn more about findings from our

2023 hospice audit survey and the latest developments in Care Compare and Hospice QAPI programs by [registering](#) for this webinar for a discussion with NHPCO's Regulatory and Quality teams. For more information, reach out to regulatory@nhpco.org or quality@nhpco.org.

CMS Opens Call for Proposals for 2024 Health Equity Conference

CMS will hold its second annual Health Equity Conference on May 29-30, 2024 in the Hyatt Regency hotel in Bethesda, MD. Conference attendance is free and includes a virtual option for remote attendance. CMS is now soliciting [proposals](#) for breakout session speakers and will hold a Call for Proposals webinar on January 18, 2024 at 2 p.m. ET. To learn more about submission and proposal guidelines, [register for the webinar](#).

MODELS & DEMOS

CMS Requests Information on the VBID Model

In December, CMS released a [request for information](#) (RFI) on the Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) Model to help inform potential future Model policy development. This RFI seeks information on various aspects of the VBID model, particularly hospice care, including hospice access and network adequacy considerations. This RFI also includes questions regarding health equity, including flexibilities that would enable Medicare Advantage Organizations to target VBID benefits based on certain factors. Comments are due to the VBID Mailbox at VBID@cms.hhs.gov by **January 31**.

NHPCO will submit a response to the RFI and is soliciting member feedback through [a Qualtrics survey](#). To ensure your comments inform the final response, please complete the survey by Wednesday, January 26. Any questions can be directed to innovation@nhpco.org.

QUALITY

CMS HQRP Hospice Outreach - December 2023

On December 27, CMS posted a [Hospice Outreach Email](#) with important updates on the HQRP, including compliance reminders, HQRP webpage updates, and links to HQRP trainings. Providers are strongly encouraged to download the email and sign up for [Quality Reporting Updates](#). If you would like to receive these quarterly update emails, reach out to QRPHelp@swingtech.com with your organization's name, CCN, and desired email contacts.

Quality Connections

End of 2023 Program Year: The Quality Connections 2023 program year will end on January 31, 2024. All activities completed through that date will be included in the year-end [Achievement Map](#) update that will occur in mid-February, and the Quality Connections portal will be closed from February 1 through February 16, 2024. Organizations that have earned rings or completed the program will receive an achievement logo to add to their online and print collateral, demonstrating their commitment to quality improvement.

Measures of Excellence (MOE) Credit: Quality Connections participants who submitted four quarters of MOE data in 2023 may now log in to the Quality Connections portal and complete the attestation to receive a second MOE credit in the Measurement pillar. Reach out to qualityconnections@nhpco.org with questions.

About QC: Quality Connections is NHPCO's core program for continuous quality improvement for hospice providers and professionals. Visit the [Quality Connections](#) page or reach out to qualityconnections@nhpco.org to learn more or to register for an upcoming [Quality Connections Orientation](#) session.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

New Format for 2024 NHPCO Webinars: Focused Miniseries

Based on your feedback, the [2024 NHPCO Webinar Series](#) will take deep dives into focused topics via a miniseries approach. The miniseries topics are outlined below, and information on continuing education credits can be found on the webinar series landing page. To purchase, please visit the page linked above or the [Webinar Registration and Pricing](#) page.

- January 18 – November 21 | Six Instances | Quality & Regulatory
- February 1 – March 11 | Six Instances | [Substance Use Disorder](#)
- May 9 and 23 | Two Instances | Pediatrics
- June 6 – July 18 | Four Instances | Palliative Care
- October 10 – November 7 | Three Instances | Volunteer Management

Continuing education credits will be purchasable after the live event for \$10 to participants who attend the entire event and complete the session evaluation. Social workers will also be required to complete a quiz. More information will be available as each series is planned.

2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference

[IDC2024](#) is the premier conference for hospice and palliative care teams and individuals. This year's conference focuses on opportunities and challenges on the front lines. As a fully virtual conference, IDC2024 enables organizations and individuals to maximize participation while minimizing cost and reducing time out of the field. [Register today and save with our early bird rates!](#)

PALLIATIVE & ADVANCED CARE

First Office Hours of 2024: January 12 at 12 p.m. ET

As you consider your goals for 2024, are changes to your palliative care program included? Do you have questions about structuring or obtaining reimbursement for your program? If so, how can we help? NHPCO is excited to continue our member exclusive Palliative Care Office Hours in 2024. While [registration is required](#), having an "official question" is not. All NHPCO members are welcome. We hope you will join us on January 12 at 12 p.m. ET.

Palliative Care Feature on Knock, Knock...Hi! Podcast

Do you know the Glaucomfleckens? Are you feeling in need of a light-hearted yet informational podcast? Pediatric Palliative Care Physician, Dr. Jared Rubenstein joined the (fictional) Glaucomfleckens on the most recent episode of [Knock, Knock, Hi!](#) This podcast covers palliative care myths, career sustainability, and what other specialties can learn from the field of pediatric palliative care.

Fast Fact #476: Serious-Illness Considerations for the Unrepresented and Adult Orphans

In clinical contexts, unrepresented persons are adults who lack capacity for medical decision-making, have no legally documented health care proxy (HCP), and have no identified family or friends to serve as surrogate decision-makers. The term adult orphan refers to an individual at risk for becoming unrepresented – they retain medical decision-making capacity but lack an HCP or surrogate. Both groups are vulnerable to goal-discordant care since they have no trusted individual to advocate for their values. While there are no national standards on how to care for the unrepresented and laws vary state to state, [this Fast Fact](#) incorporates expert opinions and consensus statements from the American Thoracic Society and American Geriatric Society to address the serious-illness care needs of these patient populations.

WE HONOR VETERANS

We Honor Veterans Office Hours

Join the We Honor Veterans' team for Office Hours on Thursday, January 18 from 12-12:30 p.m. ET. WHV participants of all levels are welcome to bring questions regarding level reports, website support, and more. [Sign up today!](#)

WHV and Opus Peace – Nurturing the Nurturer: Caregiver Distress

On Wednesday, January 24 from 3-4:30 p.m. E.T., We Honor Veterans welcomes Opus Peace founder, Deborah Grassman, NP and Executive Director, Angie Snyder, MSN, MHA, CHPN for a presentation on managing caregiver distress. Join to learn about stress, secondary trauma, and the caregiver brain. Nurses are eligible to receive 1.5 CEUs. [Register here!](#)

MEMBER UPDATES

Your Recruiting Lightbulb Moment is Here

The best and brightest talent in hospice and palliative care can be found on the [NHPCO Career Center](#). The NHPCO Career Center is a niche association job board created specifically for the hospice and palliative care community and the professional value of our talent pool is unmatched, providing you with a wide range of relevant, high-quality talent.

Upcoming January Membership Orientation Call

New to NHPCO? Welcome! Our Membership Orientation Calls provide an opportunity for members to connect, share valuable insights about NHPCO, and maximize the benefits of membership. Join the Membership team on the second Friday of each month from 2-3 p.m. ET. Your membership is important to us and we're here to support you every step of the way. [Register for January 12 call today.](#)

MyNHPCO Volunteer Management Community Mentorship Program

Need some guidance as a Volunteer Coordinator? Or maybe you have some valuable insights to share as a mentor? The Volunteer Management Mentorship program application window is open until January 19, 2024. [Mentor Application](#) | [Mentee Application](#) | [Returning Mentor Application](#)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Project ECHO: *Equity Where It Matters* - Health Equity Certificate

Individuals who participated in at least 17 of the 24 Project ECHO: *Equity Where It Matters* 2023 sessions and completed program evaluation requirements will earn an NHPCO Health Equity Certificate. If you attended 17 or more sessions throughout the year, you can complete previous session evaluations and knowledge checks you may have missed by **January 12, 2024** to receive your Health Equity Certificate. Below are the evaluation and knowledge check links for the most recent sessions.

- December 14: [Equity Where It Matters: A Summary of Health Equity in Hospice and Palliative Care](#)
- December 7: [The Unique Needs of Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Hospice and Palliative Care](#)
- November 16: [Cross-Cultural Variation in Grief and Mourning](#)
- November 2: [Disrupting Ageism](#)
- October 19: [Culturally Responsive Trauma-Informed Care](#)

For access to other past evaluations and surveys from previous Project ECHO sessions, visit the [Project ECHO website](#). Please reach out to innovation@nhpco.org if you have any trouble accessing links.

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Minority Health

On February 13-14, in Rockville, MD, the Advisory Committee on Minority Health (ACMH) will have a meeting focusing on the implementation of the anticipated updates to the Office of

Management and Budget federal race and ethnicity data collection standards. Pre-registration is required for the public to attend the meeting, provide comments, and/or distribute printed materials to ACMH members. Members of the public must [register](#) for the meeting by January 30, at 5 p.m. ET.

HEAL Initiative: Understanding Individual Differences in Human Pain Conditions

This [grant from the NIH](#) supports research aimed at a holistic understanding of between-person differences in human pain conditions, focusing on whole person health and enhancing pain treatment and management strategies toward personalized pain medicine. If interested, the deadline to apply is February 6.

NHPCO PODCAST

Season 2, Ep. 9 “The Future of NHPCO and NAHC” - Out Now!

On this episode, Melinda Gruber, Chair of the Board of Directors for NHPCO, and Ken Albert, Chairman of the Board for the National Association for Home Care & Hospice, join the podcast to discuss the future of both organizations and the continuum of care. [Tune in](#) to learn more about the affiliation between both organizations and what next steps lie ahead in 2024.

MyNHPCO COMMUNITIES

Upcoming Chats Not to Miss

As a member of NHPCO, you have free access to specialized chats with peers from across the country through the [MyNHPCO Communities](#), including:

- [Understanding and Battling Staff Burnout](#) - You're invited to the MyNHPCO Workforce Issues Community inaugural chat! On Tuesday, January 16 at 1 p.m. ET, presenters will dive into the topic of burnout in the homecare work force and discuss research conducted on the unique contributors to burnout in nurses. A panel will help guide participants in ways to identify and address burnout among interdisciplinary staff.
- [Hospice Quality 101](#) - Don't forget to register for the MyNHPCO QAPI Community chat on Tuesday, January 16 at 3 p.m. ET to explore the basics of hospice quality regulatory components, Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP), Performance Improvement Initiatives, and provide attendees with many helpful resources.
- [NHPCO and MyNHPCO Library and Resources Recap](#) - Don't miss out on the MyNHPCO Volunteer Management Community chat on Wednesday, January 17 at 3 p.m. ET as presenters review the NHPCO and MyNHPCO Library and resources to provide tips and tricks that best support Volunteer Management programs.
- [Hospices' Top Three Roadblocks to Transparent and Effective Communication](#) - Join the MyNHPCO Finance/Information Systems Community Chat on Tuesday January 23 at 3 p.m. Learn about the best-in-class leadership assessment tools from [Blackmor, CPA](#), and learn to identify known roadblocks and unknown blind spots to effectively navigate 2024's biggest threats to hospice care.
- [Clinical Consultation and Supervision: Supporting Good Clinical Practice and Regulatory Compliance](#) - Social workers are a core discipline in hospice, supporting the psychosocial needs of patients and families, and providing consultation to hospice team members. To do this important work and grow as clinicians, social workers need their own consultation from other social workers. Register for the MyNHPCO Social Work Community chat on Wednesday, January 24 at 1 p.m. ET to discuss the benefits of social work specific supervision, supervisory requirements for administrative supervision, and strategies for meeting those requirements.
- [Increased Survey Activity and Readiness: How to Prepare and Manage the Various Types of Audits](#) - You're invited to the MyNHPCO Clinical and Operations Management Community chat to discuss the various types of federal audits, what entities you may be dealing with, what the order of appeals may look like, and how to manage the increased

workload. On Wednesday, January 24 at 3 p.m., presenters will share experiences from the group on how they have managed recent audits and who does what to ensure timely submission and compliance along the way.

- **[Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group](#)** - Don't forget to register for the MyNHPCO Spiritual Caregiver Community peer-led support group on Tuesday, January 25 at 3:30 p.m. to join a peer-led support group with a focus on spiritual care leadership and mentoring. This group provides a safe space for guidance, enhancing professional performance and development, providing mentoring and leadership direction, and supporting all clinicians who provide spiritual care in an interdisciplinary setting.

Chat Recordings Now Available

MyNHPCO Community chats are recorded and posted for your convenience. Here are the recent chat recordings now available:

- **Volunteer Management Community Chat Recording:** [Volunteer Management Open Discussion](#)
- **Bereavement Professional Community Chat Recording:** [The Forgotten Grievers: Who Are They and What Makes Them Forgotten?](#)
- **Pharmacist Community Chat Recording** – [Why the Buzz About Buprenorphine? Overview of Buprenorphine for Pain Management in Hospice](#)
- **Spiritual Caregiver Community Chat Recording** – [Back to Basics: What Services Do Spiritual Caregivers Provide?](#)

The full [chat schedule](#) is available on MyNHPCO. You must be logged in to access details on MyNHPCO Chats. Please also note that to view some chat recordings, you may have to join the appropriate MyNHPCO community. Chats are a unique opportunity for professional communities to learn together; continuing education credits are not available.

NewsBriefs is a weekly publication provided to members of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

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