



PEPPER Dashboard: How Optum data highlights actionable details not provided to your hospice by Medicare [Learn More](#)

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

TOP STORIES

New Resource Available from the Diversity Advisory Council

We are excited to share the latest resource from the NHPCO Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), *Culturally Sensitive Communications to Enhance Care Delivery: A Resource Guide for Healthcare Professionals*. This guide offers linguistic considerations to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging related to health, hospice, and palliative care. It contains information from a multitude of NHPCO resources, such as the Hospice Through the DEI Lens report, Inclusion and Access Toolkit, Black and African American Outreach Guide, Chinese American Resource Guide, Latino Outreach Guide, and LGBTQ+ Resource Guide, as well as information from external research sources. The goal of the guide is to provide information and suggestions to all providers, especially those serving diverse communities, that will advance health equity in end-of-life care. In creating a common lexicon, we can enable organizations to operate from the same values, and foster diverse, equitable, and inclusive approaches. [Download the guide and access other NHPCO DEI resources.](#)



Last Chance for Early Bird Rate - 2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference

The 2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference (IDC2024) is the premier conference for hospice and palliative care teams and individuals, focusing on opportunities and challenges on the front lines. Live, online events occur April 15–17, and on-demand content is available through June 15. [Register by February 8](#) to receive the Super Saver rate!

The Conference Planning Committee has built a program that addresses complexities, challenges, and complications faced by professionals delivering hospice and palliative care, to provide strategies and approaches to effectively address them, and to ensure the provision of high-quality, evidence-based, exceptional care.

Already registered for IDC2024? Don't miss the members-only [Super Saver discount](#) for the 2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 5: Webinar – Substance Use Disorder Miniseries: [Substance Use Disorder Considerations for the Seriously Ill](#)

February 6: [We Honor Veterans Office Hours](#)

February 6: Integrative and Rehabilitation Therapies Chat – [Community Conversation: Hopes, Goals, and Challenges in the New Year](#)

February 7: Bereavement Professional Chat – [New to Bereavement](#)

February 9: [Membership Orientation Call](#)

February 13: [Quality and Regulatory Office Hours](#)

February 12: Hospice MDP – [Managing the Changing Organization](#)

February 13: Development/PR/Marketing Chat – [Open Office Hours for Dev/PR/Marketing Professionals](#)

February 13: Nurse Chat – [Good Boundaries and Self Care Go Hand in Hand](#)

February 14: Spiritual Caregiver Chat – [Going Home: Exploring African American Spirituality at End of Life](#)

February 15: [We Honor Veterans Office Hours](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

NHPCO Finalizes 2023 Hospice Audit Survey Report

Last year, NHPCO was joined by three other national associations in conducting a hospice audit survey to solicit feedback from our members on specific hospice audit experiences and challenges. This survey closed on October 31 with 133 responses received. Responses were substantive and provided detailed information about the specific situations, challenges, and successes experienced by hospices during the audit process. In January, NHPCO completed a [report](#) summarizing findings from this survey, which we shared with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Any questions can be directed to regulatory@nhpco.org.

NHPCO Meets with CMS Regarding Hospice Audit System Challenges

On January 19, NHPCO met with leaders from the Center for Program Integrity (CPI) at CMS to discuss challenges with the system of hospice audits, including how poorly structured and targeted audits can disrupt hospice operations and harm patient access to care. The meeting included NHPCO staff leadership and representatives from member hospices. CPI staff were engaged in the discussion and indicated they would consider feedback in the effort to identify ways to improve the hospice audit process. NHPCO will continue to identify opportunities to engage with CPI in the future.

NHPCO Updates COVID-19 PHE Waiver Guidance

NHPCO recently updated a May 2, 2023 regulatory alert titled 'Final CMS Guidance for the Expiration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.' Find the updated version [here](#).

MODELS & DEMOS

New CMS Value-Based Care Webpage

CMS has created a [new webpage focused on value-based care](#) which includes resources for providers and the public. In addition, the new page highlights patient's experiences with value-based care. With CMS's focus on this care model, providers should become familiar with its principles and how it impacts hospice and palliative care. For more information about value-based care, review NHPCO's [Models and Demos page](#).

CMS Announces Growth in ACO Initiatives

On January 29, [CMS announced](#) the addition of 19 newly formed accountable care organizations (ACOs) in the Medicare Shared Savings Programs (MSSP) and over 200 ACOs are continuing to participate in the ACO Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health (ACO REACH) and Kidney Care Choices (KCC) models. The goal of ACOs is to address the needs of a specific population while improving the health of the populations and lowering costs. CMS has stated its commitment to ACOs moving into the future.

Updated Deadline: 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 **Friday, February 16**.

NHPCO will submit a response to the RFI and is soliciting feedback from its members through a [Qualtrics survey](#). To ensure your comments are included in the final response, please complete the survey by Wednesday, February 7. Any questions can be directed to innovation@nhpco.org.

QUALITY

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 to members from February 1 through February 16. Organizations that have earned rings or completed the program will receive an achievement graphic to add to their online and print collateral, demonstrating their commitment to quality improvement.

2024 Program Year: The new Quality Connections program year begins on February 16! Participants will find updated content in each pillar and an exciting onboarding opportunity for members who are new to the program. Stay tuned for more details.

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.

Project ECHO Miniseries: Best Practices in Dementia Care

NHPCO will resume hosting Project ECHO sessions in 2024 with a new miniseries focused on caring for patients with dementia. This miniseries, hosted in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Association, will support and enhance the ability of providers across the continuum of care to understand the unique needs of persons living with various facets of cognitive impairment. This seven-session, weekly miniseries focuses on implementation of evidence-based dementia care across the continuum, but more specifically in serious illness and at the end of life. Sessions will be held on Thursdays, 3-4 p.m. ET from March 7 through April 18. Stay tuned for additional details and a registration link!

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

2024 Hospice Manager Development Program Schedule

About MDP: The Hospice Manager Development Program (MDP) is the only comprehensive management training program that provides hospice-specific information and helps managers develop the skills they need to meet the challenges and changes they face managing programs, systems, and people. Visit the Hospice MDP [Upcoming Courses schedule](#) for more information, rates, and registration.

Managing the Changing Organization - February 12 – March 11: Managing change and the strong reactions it elicits can be difficult. This module will teach specific skills and strategies managers can use to learn to understand change, lead through it, and thrive after it. The course is now [open for registration](#).

More to come in 2024:

- [Managing Conflict in the Workplace](#): March 4 – April 1
- [The Interdisciplinary Team: Key Skills for Hospice Managers](#): May 6 – June 3

WE HONOR VETERANS

We Honor Veterans Office Hours

Join the We Honor Veterans' team for Office Hours on Tuesday, February 6, 4-4:30 p.m. ET. WHV participants of all levels are welcome to bring questions regarding level reports, website support, and more. [Sign up today!](#) Check out the [WHV Events Calendar](#) to find out about other Veteran-centric events hosted by our partners happening throughout the month of February.

MEMBER UPDATES

New and Improved Online Buyer's Guide

NHPCO has enhanced the category offerings in the [NHPCO Hospice & Palliative Care Online Buyer's Guide](#) to better meet the needs of our members, including by refining the available categories and ensuring vendors listed meet the criteria for each category.

Associate Members: Consider refining your category to better represent your brand and services. Contact membership@nhpco.org to update your listing.

Membership Orientation Call

New to NHPCO or need a refresher? Welcome! NHPCO's monthly membership orientation calls provide an opportunity for members to connect and share valuable insights about NHPCO membership. This call is designed to help members maximize the benefits of NHPCO membership. Join the Membership team monthly on the second Friday 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 February 9 orientation call.](#)

Make the Most of Your Membership

Sign up for NHPCO's [Monthly Membership Tips today!](#) Learn about the latest offerings and any hidden gems you may have missed.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Transportation Equity Brief: Caregivers and Transportation

The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center aims to promote the availability and accessibility of transportation for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. This [transportation brief](#) details the importance of transportation for older adults and adults with disabilities, their lack of options, and how caregivers play a role in the transportation needs of these communities.

Clinical-Community Linkages to Address Needs of Populations Experiencing Health Disparities

This [grant from the NIH](#) will advance research that leverages healthcare-community partnerships to address unmet health-related social needs among individuals and families and adverse social determinants of health within communities. If interested, the deadline to apply is March 22.

DECIDE: Dyads and Families

This [study](#), sponsored by Emory University in collaboration with the National Institute on Aging, will design and test a decision-making program that is tailored to support adult daughters making healthcare decisions for their parents who are living with memory loss to improve the quality of life of African American families. This study will take place in Atlanta, Georgia.

NHPCO PODCAST

Season Finale Out Now!

On the "NHPCO 2024 Member Offerings" episode, NHPCO's Director of Education, Sarah Bal, and Manager of Member Engagement, Carla Smith, join to speak on the many offerings that members can take advantage of including webinars, MyNHPCO Chats, and 2024 conference attendance. [Tune in to learn more](#). All NHPCO Podcast episodes can be found on Apple, Spotify, and major podcast streaming platforms. Stay tuned for more information on the next season of the podcast later this year.

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:

- [Community Conversation: Hopes, Goals, and Challenges in the New Year](#) - You're invited to the MyNHPCO Integrative & Rehabilitation Therapies Community Chat on Tuesday, February 6, 2-3 p.m. ET to discuss program-related and individual professional goals for this coming year. Bring questions, stories, successes, and frustrations to share in a supportive environment. We all offer therapies that enhance quality of life and overall wellbeing and yet, we know there are myriad challenges in delivering these services to the folks who need and deserve them. We are stronger as a community and will benefit from one another's creative ideas and mutual support.
- [New to Bereavement](#) - Are you new to bereavement or looking for a refresher? Join the Bereavement Professional Community chat on Wednesday, February 7, 2-3 p.m. ET to learn about items paramount to a bereavement staff member's success, including regulations related to bereavement services and the fundamentals of the role of the bereavement counselor.
- [Open Office Hours for Development/Public Relations/Marketing Professionals](#) - Join the MyNHPCO Development/PR/Marketing Community chat on February 13 at 1 p.m. ET for the opportunity to bring your questions, successes, and frustrations to other DPRM professionals. Join a variety of DPRM experts in the hospice and palliative care field available to address questions, find common solutions, and discuss the current state of developing community support for your organization's mission.
- [Good Boundaries and Self Care Go Hand in Hand](#) - Do you think you have good boundaries? Do you practice self-care? Please join the MyNHPCO Nurse Community chat, Tuesday, February 13, 3 - 4 p.m. ET, to discuss how good boundaries and self-care can help with compassion fatigue.
- [Going Home: Exploring African American Spirituality at End of Life](#) - Spirituality can be a vital force for many African Americans in making healthcare decisions which may significantly influence the end-of-life journey. In this month's MyNHPCO Spiritual Caregiver Community chat on Wednesday, February 14, 3 -4 p.m. ET, facilitators will discuss how crucial it is for the interdisciplinary team to provide compassionate care reflecting cultural humility and sensitivity for the whole person while engaging the role of spirituality in the lives of patients and their families.

Chat Recordings Now Available

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

- [Finance/Information Systems Community Chat Recording](#) - [Hospices' Top Three Roadblocks to Transparent and Effective Communication](#)
- [Social Work Community Chat Recording](#) - [Regulatory Updates, Social Work and the IDG](#)
- [Clinical and Operations Management Community Chat Recording](#) - [Increased Audit Activity and Readiness: How to Prepare and Manage the Various Types of Audits](#)

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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