



**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.*

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**TOP STORIES**

**2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference – Call for Proposals Open**

The Call for Proposals for the [2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference \(ALC2024\)](#) is now open! Conference topics fall into one of the following categories: Advancing the Care Continuum, Developing Organizational Leaders, and Organizational Performance Improvement. The Conference Planning Committee is seeking interactive content that highlights lessons learned, innovative topics, and tangible solutions providers can apply to their organizations. Proposals are due by April 26, 11:59 p.m. ET, with notification of acceptance in June. [Review the guidelines and submit your proposal](#). Still have questions? NHPCO's Education Team will be holding an optional Call for Proposals Office Hours on Wednesday, April 12 at 1 p.m. ET via Zoom. [Register for office hours](#) and utilize this opportunity to ask questions regarding the submission process.



**New Resource – NHPCO Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HGRP) Toolkit**

The *Charting a Course to Quality: Hospice Quality Reporting Program Toolkit* is now available to NHPCO members. This toolkit provides a comprehensive overview of the HGRP for new and seasoned quality professionals, including measure details, compliance and payment implications, public reporting, provider preview reports, and more. Members are encouraged to download the new resource from the [Hospice Quality Resources page](#).

**NHPCO and We Honor Veterans Welcome CMS Clarification Regarding Medicare Hospice Benefit for Dually Eligible Veterans**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently issued [Change Request 13523](#), which updates the Medicare Benefit Manual to clarify that a Veteran beneficiary who elects hospice services under the Medicare benefit may still receive services that are not included in the hospice plan of care and are furnished and paid under the beneficiary's VA benefits, in addition to hospice services. This is a much-needed clarification that NHPCO and WHV have advocated for to help ensure eligible Veterans get the best possible care with access to the full suite of benefits to which they are entitled. It is also an important demonstration of how concurrent care can optimize the patient experience.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 18:** End-of-Life Doula Chat: [Ask a Doula: An Interview](#)

**March 19:** Quality Assessment/Performance Improvement Chat: [Effective QAPI Meetings](#)

**March 20:** Physician/Advanced Practice Provider Chat: [Advance Care Medical Planning: Why Isn't This Done and What We Can Do](#)

**March 20:** Volunteer Management Chat: [The ABCs and 123s of Volunteer Program Compliance: From the Pages of the Medicare CoPs](#)

**March 21:** We Honor Veterans [Office Hours](#)

**March 21:** Project ECHO Dementia Care Miniseries: [Best Practices and Beyond](#)

**March 27:** Workforce Chat: [Developing Highly Functioning Teams: Using Interpersonal Skills to Create a Cohesive and Productive Team](#)

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**March 28:** [Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group Meeting](#)

**March 28:** Project ECHO Dementia Care Miniseries: [Best Practices and Beyond](#)

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## REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

### **CMS Updates the Hospice Model Election Statement Example**

On March 11, CMS updated the Hospice Model Election Statement in response to a meeting held last week with NHPCO and the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC). Changes include election addendum provision timeframe modifications to be consistent with regulatory timeframes revised in 2021, as well as additional language to the representative's signature to clarify that this is the beneficiary's representative if the beneficiary is unable to sign. The updated Model Hospice Election Statement can be found on the [CMS Hospice website](#). NHPCO strongly encourages hospices to use this Model Election Statement.

### **Change Healthcare Updates Timeline for Cyberattack Recovery**

In February, Change Healthcare experienced a cyberattack that disrupted several of its network and system operations. Change Healthcare recently [updated](#) its timeline for restoring operations in response to a cyberattack, stating that electronic payment functionality will be available beginning March 15 and connectivity to the claims network and software would be reestablished on March 18. In response to this attack and its adverse impact on our nation's healthcare system, on March 5, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a [statement](#) providing instructions to providers impacted by this incident.

### **Hospice Medical Director and Administrator Reporting Instructions**

Last month, the CMS [MLN Connects newsletter](#) clarified "that hospice and skilled nursing facility medical directors and administrators are always considered managing employees for Medicare provider enrollment purposes. You must report all current managing employees. If you haven't reported a medical director or administrator, report them now." This newsletter suggests that hospices should report any missing hospice medical director or administrator as soon as possible and should not wait for Medicare revalidation. Hospices can obtain information about the Change of Information process for reporting their medical director and administrator on the [CMS enrollment website](#).

### **NHPCO Updates Website with Physician Enrollment Requirements**

Beginning May 1, 2024, a physician must be enrolled in or validly opted out of Medicare at the time they certify a patient's terminal illness for Medicare to pay for hospice services. NHPCO recently updated its [website](#) to provide additional information about this requirement. NHPCO strongly encourages hospice providers to engage with physician partners to ensure that services are covered beginning May 1. Please reach out to [regulatory@nhpco.org](mailto:regulatory@nhpco.org) with any questions.

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## QUALITY

### Measures of Excellence (MOE) Walkthrough

Join NHPCO on Wednesday, April 3 from 1-2 p.m. ET as we walk through the [Measures of Excellence](#) report. This session will focus on key aspects of the MOE, including an overview of the data set collection and submission process, how to leverage the dashboard, and analyzing your data. The session is intended for current MOE participants, those considering participating, and NHPCO members. [Register here](#), or reach out to [moe@nhpco.org](mailto:moe@nhpco.org) with questions.

### HQRP Updates – Open Door Forum (ODF)

A transcript and recording of the February 22 CMS Home Health, Hospice, and DME ODF has been posted to the [CMS Open Door Forum Podcasts and Transcripts webpage](#). Members are encouraged to sign up for the [CMS ODF mailing list](#) to receive future ODF communications.

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## PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

### Managing Conflict in the Workplace - March 18 – April 15

Conflict is part of human nature; each of us brings unique values, goals, beliefs, ideas, and needs to our work. In this Level II module, participants will learn about the nature and styles of conflict, the skills needed to address conflict, and effective strategies for managing it. [The course is now open for registration.](#)

#### More to come in 2024:

- [The Interdisciplinary Team: Key Skills for Hospice Managers](#): May 6 – June 3
- [MDP Foundational Course](#): May 20 – July 1

**About MDP:** The Hospice Manager Development Program 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.

### 2024 Updated CE/CME Opportunities

NHPCO experts and advisors have reviewed and revamped many [online learning](#) offerings, including signature programs and online enduring materials. Explore the [full catalog](#) to learn more or check out the courses below on the latest hospice regulations and standards:

- [Hospice Quality Certificate Program \(HQCP\)](#): This program reviews the federal hospice regulations, compliance as the foundation of a quality hospice program, and the connection between compliance and quality outcomes.
- [Hospice Compliance Certificate Program \(HCCP\)](#): This program covers the basics of healthcare compliance, including developing a compliance program, compliance risk assessment, compliance policies and procedures, and anonymous reporting.
- [Hospice Conditions of Participation](#): This module reviews hospice levels of care and presents application scenarios for participants. The module discusses the provision of hospice care in nursing facilities, a regulatory "hot spot" for providers today.

If you've completed HQCP or HCCP, check out the recently updated [companion courses](#). To enroll in NHPCO's courses, visit the [Online Catalog](#).

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## MEMBER UPDATES

### Volunteers Are the Foundation of Hospice Awards 2024 Nomination Period Opening Soon!

The [Volunteers Are the Foundation of Hospice Awards](#) recognize hospice volunteers who best reflect the universal concept of volunteerism in its truest sense – serving as an inspiration to others. Recipients of these awards have demonstrated commitment of time and responsibility, have made a notable impact by significantly strengthening a hospice program or the lives of

patients/families served, and have undergone substantial personal growth as hospice volunteers. The 2024 nomination period opens on Wednesday, March 20; more information will be provided as it is available on the page linked above.

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## WE HONOR VETERANS

### **We Honor Veterans Office Hours**

Join the We Honor Veterans' (WHV) team for Office Hours on Thursday, March 21, 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!](#) Stay updated on all events hosted by our WHV partners via the [Events Calendar](#).

### **Level 5 Improvements – New Cohort System, Updated Materials, and Upcoming Forum**

The WHV team is excited to announce an update to Level 5! This update will include a new schedule for partners to submit their Level 5 Reports and revamped materials to improve comprehension of Level 5 required activities. These changes will help ensure the integrity and accessibility of Level 5. Our website team is working to update the WHV site with these improvements. Full details on these updates in our [recent blog post](#).

For partners looking to get their questions answered, the WHV team is hosting a forum on the Level 5 improvements. The forum will begin with an overview of Level 5 updates and activities, followed by a period for questions and answers. Join on [Wednesday, March 20, 3:30-4:30 p.m. ET](#).

### **Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Toolkit**

March 29 is Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, an opportunity to provide Vietnam Veterans the hero's welcome they never received. As we prepare to recognize this day, we invite you to review our Vietnam-focused resources and guides for honoring Veterans.

- Host an educational event featuring one of our [Veteran-focused resources](#).
- Familiarize yourself with the [history of the Vietnam War's impact](#).
- Get inspired by the [Welcome Home events](#) our hospice partners have hosted in previous years.

Review our updated [Veteran Pinning Ceremony Guide](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) and utilize our [Veteran Certificates of Recognition](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) in your next honor ceremony.

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## NATIONAL HOSPICE FOUNDATION

### **Scholarship Applications for IDC2024 Open Through March**

In anticipation of the 2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference (IDC2024), the National Hospice Foundation continues to offer [a scholarship opportunity available to NHPCO members](#). Applications will be accepted through Friday, March 29. All applications will be reviewed in early April and applicants will be notified of decisions at that time. Please see our website for more information on [eligibility/selection criteria](#) and [apply today](#).

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## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

### **Report of the Advisory Committee on Research on Women's Health: Fiscal Years 2021-2022**

[This report](#) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) details the NIH-wide programs conducted to fulfill ORWH's core mission, including research on the health of women and the influence sex and gender have on health and disease.

### **Indian Health Service Nursing Grant Opportunity**

[The Indian Health Service](#) provides grants to develop and maintain nursing education programs, which are designed to recruit, retain, graduate, and increase the number of registered nurses,

certified nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners who deliver healthcare services to American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. If interested, the deadline to apply is May 14.

### **Tribal Researchers Cancer Control Fellowship**

This fellowship from the [Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board](#) will provide fellows with a two-week summer training in June 2024 and a one-week follow-up training in the fall. Fellows will have formal training, distance learning, peer and career mentorship to develop and implement cancer control projects, connection to a network of experts in cancer control and prevention in Indian Country, and eligibility for paid internships. American Indian and Alaska Native graduate students, researchers, and tribal health workers with a demonstrated interest in cancer prevention and control are encouraged to apply. If interested, the deadline to apply is March 20.

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## **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:

- [Ask A Doula: Am Interview](#) - Don't forget to register for the MyNHPCO End-of-Life Doula Community chat on Monday, March 18, 3-4 p.m. ET. Attendees will hear from practicing end-of-life doulas about the support they provide at various stages of life, their collaboration with hospices, and their role in an interdisciplinary team. To ensure this presentation is tailored to the needs of NHPCO members, we invite you to submit questions when you register in Zoom.
- [Effective QAPI Meetings](#) - You're invited to the MyNHPCO QAPI Community Chat on Tuesday, March 19, 3-4 p.m. ET for a discussion on how hospices can hold efficient, meaningful QAPI meetings that incorporate the multidisciplinary team.
- [Advance Care Medical Planning: Why Isn't This Done and What We Can Do](#) - Register for the MyNHPCO Physician/Advanced Practice Provider Community chat scheduled for Wednesday, March 20, 1-2 p.m. ET. Hospice and palliative care physicians understand the importance of advance care planning, but what about the rest of the medical community? What about public perception? Why aren't all aspects of this employed routinely? Dan Morhaim, M.D., will tackle these questions, and he welcomes your participation in a discussion of how we can do better.
- [The ABCs and 123s of Volunteer Program Compliance: From the Pages of the Medicare CoPs](#) - Join the MyNHPCO Volunteer Management Community chat on Wednesday, March 20, 3-4 p.m. ET. This chat is designed to help you understand the regulations beyond the five-percent requirement. You will learn how to get "survey ready" and what a surveyor might ask of you. Being prepared is key!
- [Developing Highly Functioning Teams: Using Interpersonal Skills to Create a Cohesive and Productive Team](#)  
You're invited to the MyNHPCO Workforce Community chat on March 27, 2-3 p.m. ET. We'll discuss the importance of interpersonal skills in any work setting and the positive impact of practicing and encouraging the use of interpersonal skills. We'll cover why interpersonal skills are salient and what value interpersonal skills bring to the interdisciplinary team, creating productivity and cohesion among all staff.
- [Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group](#) - Don't forget to register for the MyNHPCO Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group on Thursday, March 28, at 3:30 p.m. to join a support group focused on spiritual care leadership and mentoring. This group provides a safe space for receiving 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:

- **Bereavement Professional Chat Recording – [Grief in Dementia](#)**
- **Spiritual Caregiver Chat Recording - [Can You Help Me? Exploring the Spiritual Needs of Caregivers](#)**

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.

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

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