



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

TOP STORIES

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Toolkit for Partners

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day is coming up soon on March 29; the We Honor Veterans team has a variety of resources available to help your organization prepare for the day and honor Vietnam War Veterans in the communities you serve.

- 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 the updated [Veteran Pinning Ceremony Guide](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)).
- Utilize the [Veteran Certificates of Recognition](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) in your next honor ceremony.



MedPAC Publishes March 2024 Report to Congress

On Friday, March 15, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) released its [March 2024 Report to Congress](#), including its hospice chapter. In the report, MedPAC recommended "[f]or fiscal year 2025, the Congress should eliminate the update to the 2024 Medicare base payment rates for hospice." MedPAC is an advisory body that makes recommendations to Congress. Even with a unanimous vote in favor of any recommendation, Congress must adopt the legislative changes to put these recommendations into effect. NHPCO sent out [a policy alert](#) on Friday with a breakdown of key points of the report.

Volunteers Are the Foundation of Hospice Awards 2024 Nomination Period Now Open!

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, made a notable impact by significantly strengthening a hospice program or the lives of patients/families served, and undergone substantial personal growth as hospice volunteers. The 2024 nomination period is now open until April 30. Awards will be presented during the [NHPCO 2024 Annual Leadership Conference](#) on September 16-18, in Denver, CO. Our goal is for honorees to accept the awards in person at the conference and will begin notifying award winners in late July. Don't wait to [submit your star volunteers!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

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

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

April 2: Integrative & Rehabilitation Therapies Community Chat: [Assessing and Working with Spiritual Needs in Hospice Music Therapy](#)

April 2: [We Honor Veterans Office Hours](#)

April 3: Bereavement Professional Community Chat: [Grief: Risk Assessing and Care Planning](#)

April 3: [Measures of Excellence Walkthrough](#)

April 4: Project ECHO Dementia Care Miniseries: [Best Practices and Beyond](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

CMS Updates the Hospice Model Election Statement Example

On March 11, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (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 with any questions.

QUALITY

Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HGRP) Quarterly Q&A Q4 2023

The HGRP Quarterly Q&A for Q4 2023 is now available. This resource includes selected questions from the CMS Hospice Quality Help Desk during the fourth quarter of 2023. Members are encouraged to download the document from the Downloads section of the [HGRP Requirements and Best Practices](#) page.

HGRP Provider Toolkit

CMS has updated provider HGRP resources, including Getting Started with the HGRP, Getting Started with HGRP CASPER QM Reports, and Getting Started with Review and Correct Reports. Members are encouraged to download these documents from the downloads section of the [HGRP Requirements and Best Practices](#) page, as well as the new NHPCO resource [Charting a Course to Quality: Hospice Quality Reporting Program Toolkit](#).

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference – Call for Proposals Open

The Call for Proposals for the [2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference \(ALC2024\)](#) is open now! 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. Watch the recording on the [ALC2024 webpage](#).

MEMBER UPDATES

Shape the Future

NHPCO members have the opportunity to shape the future of hospice and palliative care, advocate for patients, and collaborate with like-minded professionals. [Learn more and get involved](#) today!

WE HONOR VETERANS

Partner Portal Closure

The WHV Partner Portal will be closed for maintenance beginning Thursday, March 21 at 5 p.m. ET and reopen Tuesday, March 26 at 8 a.m. ET. This closure is necessary for the WHV site to maintain compliance with NHPCO website standards, prevent slowdowns for users, and allow the WHV team to complete Level 5-specific updates. We apologize for this inconvenience and thank you for your patience during this time.

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 Level 5 Reports and revamped materials to improve comprehension of Level 5 required activities. These changes help ensure the integrity and accessibility of Level 5. Our team is working now to update the WHV site with these improvements. Full details are available in our [recent blog post](#).

Partner Networking Call

Join us for our first WHV Partner Networking Call of 2024 on April 11 at 4 p.m. ET! Attendees will be updated with the most recent news from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), NHPCO, and WHV partners. We look forward to welcoming [Dream Foundation](#) to discuss Dreams for Veterans, a recipient of the prestigious 2023 Fisher Service Award. We will also be joined by a representative from the VA who will review and provide updates on available VA benefits and services. [Register here!](#)

NATIONAL HOSPICE FOUNDATION

Scholarship Applications for IDC2024 - Closing March 29

The National Hospice Foundation is offering [a scholarship opportunity available to NHPCO members for](#) the 2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference (IDC2024). Applications will be accepted through Friday, March 29, 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](#).

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Broadening Equity and Access in Medicine (BEAM) Scholars Visiting Elective Program

The [BEAM Scholars Visiting Elective Program](#), now open to rising fourth-year medical students, provides scholarships to recruit individuals committed to promoting equitable access to health care in rotations at the Long School of Medicine at UT Health San Antonio. The program aims to develop and prepare a medical workforce focused on broadening healthcare access to historically underserved populations and under-resourced communities. If interested, the deadline to apply is April 1.

Hispanic Leadership Development Fellowship

The [Hispanic Leadership Development Fellowship Program](#), funded by the HHS Office of Minority Health, is offering current graduate students and recent graduates a paid nine-month leadership opportunity to prepare for career opportunities within public health agencies and increase awareness and competency in health equity knowledge and practice. If interested, the deadline to apply is April 1.

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:

- [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 the value they bring to the interdisciplinary team, creating productivity and cohesion among all staff. 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.

- [Assessing and Working with Spiritual Needs in Hospice Music Therapy](#) - Join the MyNHPCO Integrative & Rehabilitation Therapies Community chat on April 2, 2-3 p.m. ET. During this session, presenters will introduce spiritual assessment and ethics in the context of hospice music therapy, and participants will explore how to address spiritual needs with patients and their family members.
- [Grief: Risk Assessing and Care Planning](#) - Don't miss the MyNHPCO Bereavement Professional Community chat on Wednesday, April 3, 2-3 p.m. ET. Low, medium, and high bereavement risks are phrases spoken during every interdisciplinary team meeting and can be determined through the bereavement risk assessment. During this chat, we will discuss the risk assessment and care planning process as a guide for all levels of bereavement staff.

Chat Recordings Now Available

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

- **Spiritual Caregiver Chat Recording** - [Can You Help Me? Exploring the Spiritual Needs of Caregivers](#)
- **End-of-Life Doula Chat Recording** - [Ask a Doula: An Interview](#)
- **Quality Assessment/Performance Improvement Chat Recording** - [Effective QAPI Meetings](#)
- **Physician/Advanced Practice Provider Chat Recording** - [Advance Care Medical Planning: Why isn't This Done and What We Can Do](#)
- **Volunteer Management Chat Recording** - [The ABCs and 123s of Volunteer Program Compliance: From the Pages of the Medicare CoPs](#)

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.