



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

TOP STORIES

NHPCO and NAHC Joint Town Hall - Today at 4 p.m. ET!

NHPCO and the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) continue to explore the formation of a new, as-yet unnamed, organization combining their strengths to create a better resource and advocate for the home care, hospice, palliative, and serious-illness care community. From the beginning, our members' voices have been critical in this process. As such, all members are invited to a Town Hall today, April 25 at 4 p.m. ET, to hear updates on the process and participate in a Q&A with members of the Steering Committee leading this exploration. [Join the Town Hall](#) here.



CMS To Delay Implementation of Physician Enrollment Requirements

On April 22, NHPCO and NAHC met with CMS to address implementation challenges associated with the requirement that physicians must be enrolled or validly opted out of Medicare to certify a patient's terminal illness under the Medicare hospice benefit. Following our meeting, CMS issued a new [Questions and Answers \(Q&A\) Document](#), which provides additional guidance regarding hospice certifying physician enrollment requirements. Today, CMS alerted us that the May 1 live date for the hospice certifying physician enrollment requirement will be delayed to Monday, June 3. Additional guidance will be forthcoming in an MLN notice soon. Reach out to regulatory@nhpco.org with any questions.

2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference – Call for Proposals Deadline Extended!

The deadline to submit your proposal for the [2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference](#) (ALC2024) has been extended through the weekend! This year's conference will focus on advancing patient-centered solutions across the full spectrum of home and community-based care. Conference topics fall within one of the following categories: Advancing the Care Continuum, Developing Organizational Leaders, and Organizational Performance Improvement. **Proposals are now due by April 28, 11:59 p.m. ET**, with notification of acceptance in June. [Review the guidelines and submit your proposal.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 1:** Bereavement Professional Community Chat - [Grief: Risk Assessing and Care Planning](#)
- May 6:** Hospice MDP - [The Interdisciplinary Team: Key Skills for Hospice Managers](#)
- May 7:** Rural Community Chat - [Clinical Liaisons](#)

May 7: [We Honor Veterans Office Hours](#)

May 8: Pharmacist Community Chat - [Seizure Management in Hospice](#)

May 8: Spiritual Caregiver Community Chat - [What Happens When We Pray for a Miracle?](#)

May 9: Webinar - [Pediatrics in Hospice and Palliative Care: Where We've Been and Where We're Going](#)

May 10: [Membership Orientation Call](#)

May 10: [Palliative Care Office Hours](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

NHPCO to Host Roundtable Discussions on Proposed FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index Rule

Join NHPCO and NAHC for a series of roundtables to share your feedback on provisions of the FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index Proposed Rule. Be prepared to discuss the topic and share its potential impact on your organization and role. Each Thursday will focus on a different topic:

- **Thursday, May 2:** Health equity RFI in the FY 2025 proposed rule
- **Thursday, May 9:** High-intensive treatment RFI in the FY 2025 proposed rule
- **Thursday, May 16:** The HOPE tool, payment update, and remaining provisions in the FY 2025 proposed rule

[Register](#) for the discussions and be ready to discuss [the proposed rule](#).

CMS to Host Quarterly National Stakeholder Call

CMS will hold the quarterly National Stakeholder Call on Tuesday, April 30, 1-2 p.m. ET. The CMS leadership team will provide updates on recent accomplishments and current initiatives. Register for the webinar [here](#).

NHPCO Updates Proposed FY 2025 Medicare State/County Rate Chart

Last week, NHPCO completed its Proposed FY 2025 Medicare State/County Rate Charts for the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2025 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update](#) proposed rule, which includes strategic macro enhancements to enhance their usability, ensuring that our members can more easily access specific information tailored to state and county levels. NHPCO recently updated the rate charts to include additional instructions for enabling macros, technical updates to capture wage index values with the application of a 5% reduction cap, and minor formatting changes. The updated rate chart can be found [here](#). Please reach out to regulatory@nhpco.org with any questions.

CMS Releases Medicaid Final Rules, SNF Minimum Staffing Final Rule

On April 22, CMS released three different rules, including:

- [Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services](#) | [CMS Fact Sheet](#)
- [Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\) Managed Care Access, Finance, and Quality](#) | [CMS Fact Sheet](#)
- [Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care Facilities and Medicaid Institutional Payment Transparency Reporting](#) | [CMS Fact Sheet](#)

Through the Medicaid rules, CMS aims to ensure comprehensive coverage and access to Medicaid services through several regulatory changes and prioritize the quality and accessibility of managed care under Medicaid and CHIP programs. While the Minimum Staffing Standards final rule does not apply to hospice providers, there could be impacts to the healthcare workforce at large.

FTC Issues Final Rule Banning Non-Competes Nationwide

On April 23, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) approved a final rule that will ban non-compete contracts nationwide. In a [statement](#), the FTC indicated, "Under the FTC's new rule, existing non-competes for the vast majority of workers will no longer be enforceable after the rule's effective date." The final rule exempts senior executives who have an existing non-compete contract;

however, it prohibits employers from enforcing new non-competes, even for senior executives. The final rule is effective 120 days after publication in the Federal Register.

QUALITY

Project ECHO: Best Practices in Dementia Care

The Project ECHO miniseries presented by NHPCO and The Alzheimer's Association, *Best Practices in Dementia Care*, has concluded. The seven-session series covered a range of topics in dementia care at the end of life and provided attendees with the opportunity to discuss challenges and share successes in the field. Members who attended the miniseries are encouraged to complete the [individual session evaluations](#) and [final miniseries evaluation](#). All evaluations will close on April 29. If you are interested in watching the sessions or reviewing the presentation materials, visit [NHPCO Project ECHO: Best Practices in Dementia Care](#). For more information on NHPCO Project ECHO, visit the [NHPCO Project ECHO](#) webpage or contact projectecho@nhpco.org.

Quality in Motion: Acting on the CMS National Quality Strategy

CMS has released [Quality in Motion: Acting on the CMS National Quality Strategy](#), the latest update to the 2022 [National Quality Strategy](#). This document serves as an action plan outlining how CMS is putting quality-focused goals into motion in four priority areas: outcomes and alignment, equity and engagement, safety and resiliency, and interoperability and scientific advancement. Hospice providers are encouraged to review the report to identify CMS strategies related to improving quality and health outcomes across the care continuum, advancing health equity, avoiding preventable harm, accelerating interoperability, and additional goals with the potential to impact future developments in post-acute care quality. Reach out to quality@nhpco.org with questions.

Quality Connections

First Quarter Achievement: Congratulations to the 34 member organizations that closed rings in Quality Connections (QC) in the third quarter, including 22 organizations that closed all four rings and completed the program! The [Quality Connections Achievement Map](#) was updated on April 15, reflecting all activities completed through March 31.

QC Foundations: Members that are new to Quality Connections are encouraged to complete QC Foundations, designed to introduce participants to the structure of the program and provide a sample of the type of content they'll find throughout.

QC Evaluation Surveys: QC participants are asked to complete the Pre- and Post-Assessment surveys located on their dashboard landing page. These evaluations provide important information in planning future Quality Connections offerings.

About QC: QC 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.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference | On-Demand and Keynote Sessions Available

The [2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference](#) (IDC2024) live events are over, but there is still an opportunity to [register now](#) at a discounted rate and gain access to the extensive on-demand content library, offering over 20 CE/CME credits through June 15. Keynote sessions are also available through the conference website until May 17. Reach out to conferences@nhpco.org with questions.

The Interdisciplinary Team: Key Skills for Hospice Managers: May 6 – June 3

Skillful and well-coordinated teams require strong leaders. A manager's ability to move teams through various stages of development, positive problem solving, and effective team meetings

requires vision and expertise. This Manager Development Program (MDP) Level II module will provide key skills for hospice managers who believe the interdisciplinary team can make or break exceptional care. [The course is now open for registration.](#)

More to come in 2024:

- [MDP Foundational Course](#): May 20 – July 1
- [Managing Workplace Negativity](#): June 3 – 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.

MEMBER UPDATES

It's National Volunteer Week! Honor Your Star Volunteers

There is less than a week left to nominate your star volunteers for the [Volunteers Are the Foundation of Hospice Awards](#). No nominations will be accepted after April 30. Now is the final moment to honor your star volunteers by nominating them during National Volunteer Week. Visit [Volunteers Are the Foundation of Hospice Awards](#) before it's too late.

Membership Orientation Call

Whether you're new to NHPCO or need a refresher, we're glad you're here. Join NHPCO's monthly membership orientation calls on the second Friday of the month from 2 to 3 p.m. ET to connect, exchange valuable insights, and maximize the benefits of the NHPCO membership. Your membership matters to us, and we're committed to supporting you every step of the way. [Register for the May 10 call.](#)

Get Involved - Join a MyNHPCO Steering Committee

Get involved and make a difference by [joining a MyNHPCO Steering Committee!](#) Find where your expertise can drive change. It's your opportunity to shape the future and be at the forefront of our organization's growth and your professional development.

NATIONAL HOSPICE FOUNDATION

Apply for the Lighthouse of Hope Fund – Exclusive to NHPCO Members

[Lighthouse of Hope](#), a NHF program, is dedicated to honoring the final wishes of hospice and palliative care patients in need. This fund is available exclusively for patients of NHPCO member organizations. Hospice team members [apply](#) for the experiences on behalf of their patients. Whether it's reconnecting with long-lost family members, revisiting a favorite place, or enjoying a special dining experience, the Lighthouse of Hope fund alleviates financial burden, allowing patients to create cherished memories. Reach out to info@nationalhospicefoundation.org with questions.

WE HONOR VETERANS

We Honor Veterans Office Hours

Join the WHV team for Office Hours on Tuesday, May 7, 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!](#) Stay updated on all of the events hosted by WHV partners via the [Events Calendar](#).

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

RFI on Potential Hospice Quality Reporting Program Social Determinants of Health

On April 4, CMS published the [FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update](#). With the proposed rule, CMS asks for feedback on different topics as they develop the final rule for FY 2025 and future payment policies. These requests are an opportunity to provide CMS with "on-the-ground" experiences in providing care to Medicare beneficiaries. NHPCO requests information from providers regarding the RFI on Potential Hospice Quality Reporting Program Social Determinants of Health Items included in the proposed rule. **[Please complete the survey by May 10.](#)** If you have questions, email quality@nhpco.org.

Advancing Diversity in Aging Research through Undergraduate Education

This [grant opportunity](#), funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), supports the development and implementation of research education programs for undergraduate students of diverse backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups in the biomedical and behavioral sciences. If interested, the deadline to apply is May 25.

Strategies to Improve Health Outcomes and Advance Health Equity in Rural Populations

This [grant](#) from the NIH supports research to improve health and promote health equity in rural populations. If interested, the deadline to apply is May 17.

Caregiver VOICE Study Survey

The University of Colorado Multidisciplinary Center on Aging seeks partners and caregivers of individuals living with dementia to participate in the Caregiver VOICE research study. This study is a short telephone-based survey, aimed to collect insights to improve the quality of dementia care. If you know any patients who may be interested in contributing to this important research, encourage them to contact dementia.care@cuanschutz.edu for more information.

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:

- **[Grief: Risk Assessing and Care Planning](#)** - Don't miss the MyNHPCO Bereavement Professional Community chat on Wednesday, May 1, 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, presenters will discuss the risk assessment and care planning process as a guide for all levels of bereavement staff.
- **[Clinical Liaisons](#)** - The clinical liaison can be a critical contact for your community. What exactly is a clinical liaison? How do they build relationships? How can they use data effectively? Join the MyNHPCO Rural Community on Tuesday, May 7, 1-2 p.m. ET, to answer these questions and discuss the role of the clinical liaison.
- **[Seizure Management in Hospice](#)** - Register for the MyNHPCO Pharmacist Community chat on Wednesday, May 8, 2-3 p.m. ET to discuss common causes and clinical presentations of seizures, the appropriate use of antiepileptic medications, and treatment strategies to terminate seizures in hospice patients.
- **[What Happens When We Pray for a Miracle?](#)** - You're invited to the MyNHPCO Spiritual Caregiver Community chat on Wednesday, May 8, 3-4 p.m. ET, to discuss praying for miracles and what to do when asked by patients and families to do so.

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** - [To Outsource, or Not to Outsource...and What to Do Once You Decide](#)
- **Social Work Community Chat Recording** - [The Art of Documentation: What is Necessary and What Is Too Much When Telling a Patient's Story](#)
- **Clinical and Operations Management Community Chat** - [Improving CAHPS Survey Scores](#)

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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