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

TOP STORIES

Complete the 2024 Pediatric Palliative and Hospice Care Needs

Assessment

Has your organization cared for at least one pediatric patient during the last four years? If so, complete [the 2024 Pediatric Palliative and Hospice Care Needs Assessment](#). The Needs Assessment is a product of the Pediatric Advisory Council with the goal of gaining a better understanding of the organizations and providers caring for pediatric patients with serious illnesses throughout the United States and helping create resources and support advocacy. Any questions can be directed to pediatrics@nhpco.org.



HHS Final Rule to Strengthen Nondiscrimination Protections in Health Programs and Activities

On April 26, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Civil Rights and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a final rule, [Nondiscrimination in Health Programs and Activities](#). In a [statement](#), CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure said, "Today's rule is another important step toward our goal of health equity – toward the attainment of the highest level of health for all people, where everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their optimal health." HHS has provided a [fact sheet](#) and [FAQs](#) accompanying the final rule. NHPCO previously [commented](#) on the proposed rule, expressing support for many of the finalized provisions. The final rule is effective July 5, 2024, 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

2024 National Hospice Foundation Gala – Order Tickets Today!

Don't forget to register for the [2024 National Hospice Foundation \(NHF\) Gala](#), held on Tuesday, September 17 during ALC2024 in Denver, CO. Join us for an evening of delicious food and drinks, dancing, exciting auction opportunities, and live entertainment. All funds raised will support NHF's [Lighthouse of Hope Fund](#), offering patients with life-limiting illnesses financial support to fulfill last wishes. [Tickets](#), [supporter and underwriting packages](#), and [auction donation](#) opportunities are now available. For more information, visit our website or contact info@nationalhospicefoundation.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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](#)

May 14: Development/PR/Marketing Community Chat - [Development/PR/Marketing Open Forum](#)

May 14: [Regulatory & Quality Office Hours](#)

May 15: Volunteer Management Community Chat - [The Infamous 5% Requirement & Beyond – A Roundtable Discussion Regarding the CoP's](#)

May 16: [We Honor Veterans Office Hours](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

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. Last week, 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.

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 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](#).

QUALITY

EGSS Walkthrough

Join NHPCO on Wednesday, May 22, 1-2 p.m. ET, as we walk through the [Evaluation of Grief Support Services \(EGSS\)](#). The EGSS evaluates grief support from the perspective of the recipients of the services. This session will focus on all aspects of the EGSS survey, including an overview of surveying options, data collection, and an opportunity to submit and track results. The session is intended for grief-support providers, bereavement coordinators, and adjacent stakeholders. [Register here](#) or reach out to egss@nhpco.org for more information.

HOPE Updates

CMS provided updates on the future of the Hospice Outcomes and Patient Evaluation (HOPE) in the [FY2025 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update Quality Reporting Proposed Rule](#). NHPCO will be hosting a series of roundtables to discuss the Proposed Rule and to solicit member feedback, including a session on [May 16 at 12 p.m. ET](#), focused on HOPE, payment implications, and quality measures. Members are encouraged to review the NHPCO Regulatory Alert linked above and visit [CMS HQRP: HOPE](#) to download the Draft HOPE v1.00 and Draft HOPE Guidance Manual. Please reach out to quality@nhpco.org with questions or feedback.

Upcoming Care Compare Refresh

Publicly reported hospice quality data will be refreshed on Care Compare during May, including Hospice Item Set and CAHPS® Survey Family Caregiver Experience data. Members are encouraged to download NHPCO's [Charting a Course to Quality: Hospice Quality Reporting Program Toolkit](#) to engage staff, board members, and external stakeholders in public reporting and review the [CMS HQRP: Public Reporting - Key Dates for Providers](#) webpage for details regarding public reporting timeframes.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

2024 Updated CE/CME Opportunities

NHPCO experts and advisors have reviewed and revamped many [online learning](#) offerings, including signature programs and 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](#).

New Online Course Available - *Integrative Therapies in Hospice and Palliative Care Program*

NHPCO's online learning courses cover a variety of topics in a self-paced environment. The new *Integrative Therapies in Hospice and Palliative Care Program* is a nine-part program for multidisciplinary professionals on integrative approaches in hospice and palliative care. The course covers the evolution of the concept of integrative care, explains how integrative therapies share a holistic and multidimensional approach with palliative care, and examines "evidence" in making informed decisions about the use of integrative therapies. [Sign up now](#) or explore the full [online course catalog](#) to see a variety of topics in a self-paced environment.

MEMBER UPDATES

NHPCO – NAHC Joint Town Hall - Recording Now Available

[The recording](#) of NHPCO and the National Association for Home Care & Hospice's (NAHC) April 25 Town Hall is now available. Members of the Steering Committee shared an update on the formation of a new, joint organization, noting that both organizations' Boards have voted in support of signing an agreement to affiliate. To learn the latest in the ongoing process and catch up on the Q&A, we encourage members who missed the live discussion to view the recording on the [NHPCO](#) and [NAHC](#) websites. Your engagement is crucial as we advance in this collaborative effort.

Volunteer Awards Nomination Deadline Extended Until May 3!

You have until the close of business on Friday, May 3 to nominate your star volunteers. Now is the final moment to honor your volunteers. Visit [Volunteers Are the Foundation of Hospice Awards](#) and start now to ensure your nomination is received.

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.

PALLIATIVE AND ADVANCED CARE

Integrative Palliative Institute Podcast: Connecting with Persons with Dementia

Connecting with someone living with dementia is challenging and watching them decline can be heartbreaking. As the illness progresses, old ways of connecting or communicating may no longer work. On her [podcast](#) in just 15 minutes, Dr. Delia Chiamonte shares seven tips for fostering connection when working with a person living with dementia. Share these ideas with the families you and your team's support!

Palliative Pulse: CAPC Survey

We are supporting our friends at the Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) this week by asking for your help with their survey: *The Palliative Pulse*. CAPC is eager to hear about both your wellbeing and the health of your palliative care team. This information will help facilitate the development of tools and resources to support your organization and contribute to an annual, national research initiative on the state of the palliative care field. This survey is open to all professionals providing specialty palliative care, not just CAPC members. Please click [here](#) to join the community of individuals advancing the field of specialty palliative care.

Fast Fact #482: Alpha(α)-2 Receptor Agonists in Palliative Care

Alpha-2 adrenergic receptor agonists (α 2-AR) are a class of drugs used for a variety of indications, including hypertension, pain, and sedation; however, in the field of palliative medicine, most clinicians use these medications to manage opioid withdrawal. α 2-AR medications (such as Clonidine, Dexmedetomidine, and Guanfacine) have a wide range of use for seriously-ill patients and are available in several formulations for administration (oral, transdermal, intrathecal). Clinicians interested in learning more about how α 2-AR agonists can help with symptoms experienced by seriously-ill patients should review [Fast Fact #482](#) or check out the [full library of PCNOW's helpful facts](#).

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](#).

Mental Health Care for Veterans at End of Life

The Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties has organized a panel discussion on providing mental health care to Veterans at the end of life. Join WHV's Torie Ring and several NY-based Level 5 WHV hospice providers on Friday, May 10 at 12:30 p.m. ET to learn more. [Register here.](#)

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.

Report: The Nature of the Rural-Urban Mortality Gap

The [USDA Economic Research Service](#) published a report exploring how working-age (ages 25–54) natural-cause mortality varies by individual characteristics and regions of the country. After examining the population by sex, race and ethnicity, region, and state, the report lists an increase in the rural, prime working-age natural-cause mortality rates and a decrease in the corresponding urban rates are contributing to the growing mortality gap.

Promoting Indigenous Research Leadership

The [Promoting Indigenous Research Leadership](#) three-day workshop, held November 18-20 by the Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity, is designed to promote the public health research careers of Indigenous and other early-career faculty working with Indigenous communities across the country. If interested, the deadline to submit your application is June 3.

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:

- [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.
- [Development/PR/Marketing Open Forum](#) - Please join the MyNHPCO Development/PR/Marketing Steering Committee on Tuesday, May 14, 1-2 p.m. ET for an open forum discussion. Please bring any questions, insights, or great new practices you've found supportive to your program.
- [The Infamous 5% Requirement & Beyond – A Roundtable Discussion Regarding the CoP's](#) - Whether you are a new volunteer leader or have vast experience, we invite you to join the MyNHPCO Volunteer Management Community Chat on Wednesday, May 15, 3-4 p.m. ET, to share your needs, frustrations, questions, and successes so we can continue to learn and grow together through the realm of regulations.

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](#)
- **Bereavement Professional Community Chat Recording** - [Grief: Risk Assessing and Care Planning](#)

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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