



NHPCO
Leading Person-Centered Care

NHPCO NewsBriefs

May 14, 2020

- Hospice Music Project Album Released
- Government Funding Webinar #2
- Reminder: Submit Input for Comments
- NHPCO Monthly Call with MACs
- Send Best Infection Control Practices
- Slides/Transcript from HOPE Webinar
- NQF Issue Brief on Community Settings
- April NHPCO Webinars in Marketplace
- Hospice and PC Teams Rise to the Challenge
- Report on Caregiving in the U.S. 2020
- Upcoming MyNHPCO QAPI Chat
- Nurse MyNHPCO Chat Recording

Please be aware that NHPCO staff are working remotely as we follow guidelines from the CDC. All staff are active and digitally connected, and we anticipate little or no disruption in service.

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and Palliative Care

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Remember to log in to the NHPCO website to easily access member-only links.

TOP STORY

Music Inspired by the Compassion and Hope of Hospice from Nashville Artists

NHPCO, along with hospice physician and musician John Mulder and GRAMMY award winning songwriter Tricia Walker, are proud to release the new recording, [The World Around the Bed: Songs of hope and healing](#). Featuring 11 original songs created from the experience of hospice heroes from across the country, *The World Around the Bed...* reflects the joys, sorrows, difficult and challenging times, and even the lighthearted and humorous moments that are a part of life's journey. Album proceeds will benefit NHF's Workforce Emergency Support Fund's efforts to supply hospices with PPE. Learn more in [NHPCO's Press Release](#).

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COVID-19 UPDATES

For continually updated information regarding COVID-19, please visit nhpco.org/coronavirus.

Register for Government Funding Webinar #2

Registration is now open for the next webinar in the COVID-19 CARES Act Government Funding Series, *Dealing with Multiple Sources of CARES Act Funding (Provider Relief Funding, PPP Loans, Accelerated Payments) and Preparation for Reporting*, offered on Monday, May 18, 2:00 to 4:00 pm ET. The program will provide attendees with an increased understanding of provider obligations relating to the various funding streams available to them during this period. To meet their pressing concerns regarding use of funds and preparing for reporting to the funding sources, attendees will be provided with practical guidance in the identification of qualifying charges against the respective revenue sources as well as the avoidance of duplicate charges against those revenue sources. Faculty: Meg Pekarske and Bryan Nowicki, Husch Blackwell; Mark Sharp, CPA and Aaron Little, CPA, BKD, and Ted Cuppett, CPA, The Health Group. This webinar is open to all providers. [Register online.](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

Reminder: Submit Input for Comments by May 18

NHPCO is currently working on comments to CMS on two rules. The first is the Interim Final Rule with Comment issued March 31, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency containing two provisions impacting hospice providers: additional guidance for the telehealth hospice face-to-face encounter and the telehealth routine home care visit during this national emergency. The second rule is the FY 2021 Hospice Wage Index Proposed Rule, issued April 10, 2020, which includes a rate increase for FY 2021 of 2.6%, changes in the CBSA designations for some counties, and new election statement and addendum requirements. We welcome your input. Please send your comments regarding both rules to regulatory@nhpco.org **no later than Monday, May 18**. In the subject line, please indicate the rule for which you are providing comments.

NHPCO Monthly Collaboration Call with MACs

On Tuesday, May 12, NHPCO had its monthly call with the MACs. The following were items of discussion:

- **Election Statement and Addendum:** NHPCO and the MACs discussed the election statement and addendum in detail, including MAC collaborative plans for hospice provider education mid-summer. The MACs informed us that they have received no information from CMS regarding a delay in the October 1 implementation date of the election statement and addendum.
- **Electronic Signatures:** NHPCO asked about the use of electronic signature formats on documents that require signatures, calling attention to the language in the FY2021 Hospice Wage Index Proposed Rule that suggests that hospice providers check with their MAC to see what they will accept. CMS has not provided any guidance at this time. The MACs did stress that there would have to be a validation process in place to ensure that the signature was valid. NHPCO will comment on the need for CMS guidance on

electronic signature in the NHPCO comment letter.

- **TPE:** NHPCO expressed the concern of many providers that TPE would resume while there is still a COVID public health emergency. CMS has not provided any direction to the MACs on when TPE will resume, but the MACs informed NHPCO that notice would be provided before new TPE edits occur.
- **Use of 95 modifier for telehealth on hospice claims:** We agreed that the 95 modifier was not necessary for hospice telehealth claims, but also agreed that there was value in adding it so that the volume of telehealth could be tracked.
- **Diagnosis Code U07.1:** There are no longer any issues regarding denials of claims when a primary diagnosis code of U07.1, COVID-19, is used for hospice patients.

QUALITY

Send Us Your Best Infection Control Practices

NHPCO wants to know about the quality work you are doing for your patients, their families, and your staff during this pandemic. Please send us your best practices related to your infection control program for homecare and inpatient settings. We will collect and review the information with the aim of building a helpful and meaningful resource. Please send your feedback to covid19@nhpco.org.

Slides and Transcript for HOPE Alpha Test Informational Webinar Now Available

CMS presented a webinar on March 5 for interested hospice providers to learn more about what the Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE) alpha test will entail. During this webinar, Abt Associates provided information on the following topics:

- Eligibility to participate in the alpha test
- Benefits of participation
- Alpha test requirements and support from the Abt HOPE Testing team
- Selection of hospices to participate

The presentation slides and transcript for this event are now [available to download](#).

PALLIATIVE & SERIOUS ILLNESS CARE

NQF Issue Brief on Improving Quality of Serious Illness Care in Community Settings

On May 7, the National Quality Forum (NQF) released [Opportunities for Advancing Quality Measurement in Community-Based Serious Illness Care](#), an Issue Brief encompassing actionable recommendations, preferred tools and approaches, and measurement guidance aimed at improving the quality of serious illness care in community settings. The content in this Issue Brief is the result of input gathered from key experts convened over the past two years as part of the Serious Illness Quality Alignment Hub. This resource is available for download free of charge in the NQF Store.

Want to learn more about improving the quality of your hospice and serious illness care? Join the Virtual Conference, July 22-23, for critical tools and resources. Early bird ends June 7, [register now](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

April NHPCO Webinar Recordings in Marketplace

Did you miss any of the NHPCO webinars in April? The MP4 files are available for purchase on the NHPCO Marketplace, with a significant discount for members.

- [Screening and Assessing for Spiritual Suffering: What All Staff Can Do](#) (presented April 9)
- [Facilitating a Healthy Work-Life Balance](#) (presented April 28)

You can now purchase a webinar package with the option to include any 2020 webinar, upcoming or previously recorded. [Packages are available](#) in set of 4, 8, 12, and 24.

NEWS FROM NHPCO

Hospice and Palliative Care Teams Rise to the Challenge

Hospice and palliative care providers from across the country continue to post photos from the front lines on social media as part of the #hpcFacesOfCaring campaign. NHPCO has received over 100 submissions online and continues to encourage programs to participate by [sending your photo and story here](#) or by posting your photo online with the hashtag. Read the [latest campaign blog here](#).

OTHER NEWS & NOTES

Report on Caregiving in the U.S. 2020

The National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP have released the new report [Caregiving in the U.S. 2020](#). This report is the most recent update to the trended research series conducted roughly every five years. The 2020 update reveals an increase in the number of family caregivers in the United States of 9.5 million from 2015 to 2020. Family caregivers now encompass more than one in five Americans. The study also reveals that family caregivers are in worse health compared to five years ago.

MyNHPCO ONLINE COMMUNITY

Upcoming MyNHPCO Chat Not to Miss

Register online for free chats for NHPCO members. A reminder that continuing education is not available for our MyNHPCO community chats.

- [Understanding and Managing the CMS Targeted Probe and Educate Program](#)
In this month's QAPI chat, we'll review why CMS has designed and implement the TPE program, then take an in-depth look at how the process works. We'll explore the role of the MAC, TPE timelines and improvement plans, and how to manage your Additional Documentation Requests (ADRs). **Thursday, May 28 at 3:00 p.m. ET**

In Case You Missed It – Chat Recording on MyNHPCO

- [*Are You Managing Your Day, or is Your Day Managing You?*](#)
May 12 Nurse Community Chat Recording

The [full chat schedule](#) is available on MyNHPCO.

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

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