



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

**TOP STORIES**

**CMS Finalizes Hospice Special Focus Program in CY 2024 Home Health Final Rule**

On November 1, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the calendar year (CY) 2024 [Home Health Prospective Payment System Rate Update and Quality Reporting Program Requirements](#) final rule, which finalizes the implementation of the hospice special focus program for 2024 as well as hospice informal dispute resolution, provider and supplier enrollment changes, and hospice change in ownership provisions. NHPCO released a combined [statement](#) with other national associations condemning the agency's decision to move forward with the special focus program as proposed, noting that "CMS' decision to progress using a flawed methodology for the SFP algorithm will threaten the ability of millions of older adults and other hospice beneficiaries to access quality hospice care." For more information, see NHPCO's [regulatory alert](#).



**It's National Hospice and Palliative Care Month!**

[National Hospice and Palliative Care Month](#) (HAPCM) is officially here, and this year's theme is Courageous Conversations. In a culture that often teaches us to resist mortality and a healthcare system defined by interventionism, the seemingly simple act of having a conversation about dying can have a profound impact.

Throughout November, NHPCO is encouraging everyone to have these Courageous Conversations to start a meaningful dialogue on "dying a good death." Stay tuned across our social media platforms ([LinkedIn](#), [Twitter/X](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)) for the member stories you submitted. Don't forget – tomorrow, Friday, November 3, is [Social Media Action Day](#). Be sure to participate using the hashtags #HAPCM and #CourageousConversations and tagging NHPCO on social media so that the organization can engage with and amplify your posts.

Thank you for joining us as hospice and palliative care providers in educating your communities and raising awareness about high-quality care for people living with serious and life-limiting illnesses. Member materials are available on NHPCO's [National Hospice and Palliative Care Month webpage](#).

**Veterans Day – We Honor Veterans Resources**

Saturday, November 11 is Veterans Day, a date reserved to thank those who have served our nation. We extend our deepest gratitude to all Veterans as well as the hospice and palliative care providers across the nation who take special care to uniquely honor Veteran patients. [We Honor Veterans](#) (WHV) is a program of NHPCO, in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs, that focuses on respectful inquiry, compassionate listening, and grateful acknowledgment for Veterans receiving end-of-life care. WHV partners learn how to accompany and guide Veterans through their life stories toward a peaceful ending. In honor of November 11, the WHV team invites you to review some of our most-used materials:

- Use our [Partner Directory](#) to find a We Honor Veterans hospice organization in your area
- Learn more about holding a [Pinning Ceremony](#) to honor a critically-ill Veteran
- Review how to ["Earn Your Stars"](#) and get inspired to reach the next level
- Become an advocate with our [WHV Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- Browse our [Events Calendar](#) and find a way to get informed and stay involved
- [Submit a story](#) and tell us how your organization is providing Veteran-centric care

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 3:** [Palliative Care Office Hours](#)

**November 7:** Chat – [Development/Public Relations/Marketing Open Office Hours](#)

**November 8:** Chat – [On This Journey: Spiritual Caregiving When the Unexpected Happens](#)

**November 13:** [Membership Orientation Call](#)

**November 14:** [Quality Office Hours](#)

**November 14:** Chat – [How to Curate Your Hospice Story by Defining Your Leadership Vision](#)

**November 14:** Chat – [Hospice Care Plans: Part II](#)

**November 15:** Chat – [Volunteer Management Mentorship](#)

**November 16:** [Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group](#)

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## REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

### MedPAC to Host November Meetings

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) is hosting its [monthly meetings](#) on November 2 and 3. One of the focuses is the hospice MedPAC workplan, which includes:

- Hospice's effect on net Medicare spending.
- The hospice aggregate cap and beneficiary outcomes.
- Non-hospice spending for beneficiaries enrolled in hospice.
- Use of hospice and palliative care among beneficiaries with end-stage renal disease.

NHPCO will provide updates after the meetings. NHPCO met with MedPAC in July to discuss the [recent study on the value of hospice in Medicare](#).

### NHPCO to Hold End of Year Regulatory Updates Webinar

NHPCO will be holding a [webinar](#) on the calendar year (CY) 2024 Home Health and CY 2024 Physician Fee Schedule final rules released in November. Learn more about the impacts of hospice policy and interdisciplinary group changes by [registering](#) for this webinar for a discussion with NHPCO's regulatory and quality teams. For more information, reach out to [regulatory@nhpco.org](mailto:regulatory@nhpco.org) or [quality@nhpco.org](mailto:quality@nhpco.org).

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## MODELS & DEMOS

### NHPCO Attended HCPLAN Summit

NHPCO attended the [Health Care Payment Learning & Action Network \(HCPLAN\) Summit](#) on Monday, October 30. The Summit was an opportunity to hear from CMS as well as payers, providers, and patients on the future of alternative payment models (APMs). Conversations focused on stakeholder alignment, data, and how to make value-based care easier for providers.

For more information on APMs, review [NHPCO's Models and Demos page](#) or reach out to [innovation@nhpco.org](mailto:innovation@nhpco.org).

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## QUALITY

### HQRP Updates

**Open Door Forum (ODF):** The transcript, webinar recording, and Q&A document from the October 11 CMS ODF have been posted to the [CMS Open Door Forum Podcasts and Transcripts](#) webpage. During that call, CMS announced that an HQRP Forum will be held on November 14. Registration information will be posted to the [HQRP webpage](#) in the coming weeks.

**HQRP TEP Summary Report 2023:** CMS has released the 2023 HQRP Technical Expert Panel (TEP) Summary Report, which provides a summary of the TEP's input on options for HOPE-based quality measure development for the HQRP. Specific topics discussed include risk adjustment, future quality measurement priorities, and an update on the previously proposed HOPE-based Process Measures (*Timely Reassessment of Pain Impact* and *Timely Reassessment of Non-Pain Impact*). Members are encouraged to download the report from the [CMS Provider and Stakeholder Engagement](#) webpage.

### Quality Office Hours – Upcoming Session

Don't miss out on this monthly Quality discussion! During the October session, members discussed the proposed Special Focus Program, TPE audits, and Care Compare demographic corrections. These informal monthly sessions, hosted by the NHPCO Quality Team, are an opportunity for members to share best practices, ask questions, and discuss an array of quality topics with colleagues nationwide. The next Quality Office Hours session will be held on November 14 at 1 p.m. ET. Register on the [Quality Office Hours page](#) and submit questions in advance to [quality@nhpco.org](mailto:quality@nhpco.org).

### Quality Connections Third Quarter Emblems

Organizations that have earned four rings and completed the program for this year have received an achievement logo to add to their online and print collateral, demonstrating their commitment to quality improvement. We look forward to continued program engagement throughout the final quarter of 2023 and beyond! The [Quality Connections Achievement Map](#) was updated on October 20, reflecting all activities completed through September 30.

**About QC:** Quality Connections 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](mailto:qualityconnections@nhpco.org) to learn more or to register for an upcoming [Quality Connections Orientation](#) session.

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## PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### CE/CME Opportunities

Enroll in the courses below to learn the latest hospice regulations and standards:

- [Hospice Quality Certificate Program \(HQCP\)](#): This program includes a review of 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 also discusses the provision of hospice care in nursing facilities, a regulatory "hot spot" for providers today.

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

## NHPCO 2024 Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference

The NHPCO 2024 Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference (IDC2024) is the premier conference for hospice and palliative care teams and individuals. Live, online events occur April 15–17, and on-demand content is available through June 15. IDC2024 will focus on opportunities and challenges on the front lines. The Conference Planning Committee is building a program to address complexities, challenges, and complications faced by professionals delivering hospice and palliative care, to provide strategies and approaches to effectively address them, and to ensure the provision of high-quality, evidence-based, exceptional care. [Register today](#) to receive the Super Saver rate!

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## PALLIATIVE & ADVANCED CARE

### Reminder: Office Hours Now Tomorrow, November 3!

NHPCO will be closed in honor of Veterans Day on November 10; monthly office hours will be moved up a week to tomorrow, November 3. Do you have questions, concerns, or challenges with your existing or future palliative care offerings? Bring these, and a curious mindset, to a diverse faculty and peer group ready to help problem-solve. All NHPCO members are welcome. Registration is required but preparing an "official question" is not! [Sign up today](#).

### New PCNOW Fast Fact #378: How to Help a Patient Choose a Surrogate Decision Maker

Many seriously-ill patients lack the capacity to speak for themselves and participate in healthcare decision-making. In these situations, clinicians turn to a surrogate decision maker for guidance. Evidence suggests that within 48 hours of admission, 47.4 percent of hospitalized older adults require surrogate involvement. The goal of this Fast Fact is to explain the role of a surrogate decision maker, how to guide patients in the selection of a surrogate, and how decision-making proceeds if the patient has never selected a surrogate before becoming incapacitated. [PCNOW's Fast Fact #378](#) begins to address this topic. Check out the [full library of PCNOW's helpful facts](#).

### Journal Articles of Interest

Do you or people you speak to have difficulty understanding what palliative care is? It should go without saying that when speaking to patients, caregivers, and the public, your messages should be different than those used in conversation with colleagues. [A recent article](#) in the *Journal of Palliative Medicine* reviews the top ten things that palliative care clinicians should know about messaging to the public. You may be surprised to learn that the approach we have taken over the last decade has not had the impact we hoped. To make immediate changes to your practice, read the article - and other top ten lists in the series - in the [Journal of Palliative Medicine](#).

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## WE HONOR VETERANS

### Webinar Series: Dare to Forgive with Deborah Grassman and Opus Peace

You won't want to miss this two-part webinar series around the recently released film, *Dare to Forgive*. On November 8 and 15 from 2-3:30 p.m. ET, Stephanie Turner (Kansas City Hospice) and Ralph Ozmun (Smoky Mountain Hospice) join Deborah Grassman to provide forgiveness concepts (Part I) and to view nine short film clips and engage in panel discussion of how forgiveness can be applied in various situations (Part II). 1.5 CEs will be provided to nurses, social workers, and counselors. [Register for Part I](#) and [Part II](#) now.

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## MEMBER UPDATES

### Save Time and Renew Online: NHPCO 2024 Membership

Thank you for being a member of NHPCO and an active participant in the hospice and palliative care community! We hope NHPCO has been a useful resource for you and a strong advocate on

your behalf throughout 2023. As we approach the end of the year, the membership renewal process is beginning. You may notice that NHPCO is reaching out earlier this year than in previous ones. The goal is to make your renewal process as seamless as possible, and we thank you for engaging early. You can expect to receive a physical mailing from NHPCO in the next couple of weeks which will include your membership renewal packet. For now, you can save time and renew online by visiting [nhpco.org/renew](https://nhpco.org/renew). If you have any questions, please contact [solutions@nhpco.org](mailto:solutions@nhpco.org).

### **Membership Orientation Call**

New to NHPCO? The upcoming Membership Orientation Call provides an opportunity for members to connect and share valuable insights about NHPCO membership. This call is designed to help members maximize their benefits. Join the Membership Team on November 13 from 2-3 p.m. ET or December 8 from 2-3 p.m. ET to learn how. Your membership is important to us and we're here to support you every step of the way. [Register for the November 13](#) or [December 8 calls](#).

### **New HPM Talk Podcast Episode: ACHPN Prep Part 6 - Intervention and Management**

Join Dr. Steven Baumrucker, Medical Director, Ballad Health Palliative Medicine Associates, as he speaks with Amanda Stevens, Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Educator, Ballad Health Systems Palliative Medicine, and Carissa Depew, Palliative and Hospice Nurse Practitioner, Ballad Health Hospice, for the sixth episode in this ongoing series discussing pitfalls and pearls to help pass the ACHPN exam. Plus, hear letters from listeners! [Listen to the newest episode here](#). Subscribe to the Physician and Advanced Practice Provider Community Podcast, HPM Talk, in the podcast player of your choice.

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## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

### **Project ECHO: Equity Where It Matters**

**Evaluation and Knowledge Check:** If you attended the November 2 session, "Disrupting Ageism" please visit our [Project ECHO](#) page to complete the evaluation. If you are participating in the NHPCO Health Equity certificate program, please also complete the Knowledge Check attached to the evaluation as well. Reach out to [innovation@nhpco.org](mailto:innovation@nhpco.org) with any questions.

**Upcoming Session:** Culture informs identity and is often central to how we all move through life. Likewise, patients and families of various backgrounds and traditions often engage in the process of grief and mourning in ways that may seem unique or unknown to many clinicians. [Join us](#) on Thursday, November 16 at 3 p.m. ET as we explore and surface issues around in our next session, **Cross-Cultural Variation in Grief and Mourning**.

**About Project ECHO:** Project ECHO creates virtual communities of learners by bringing together healthcare providers, subject matter experts, and the wider community using case-based learning and an "all teach, all learn" approach. The 2023 series, Equity Where It Matters, addresses diversity and cultural competence in healthcare.

### **National Rural Health Policy, Community, and Collaboration Program**

This [cooperative agreement](#) from the Health Resources and Services Administration was created to help identify and educate rural stakeholders in rural policy and federal funding opportunities. Projects will support engagement from rural communities and build upon existing networks of rural health organizations to help improve health in rural communities. If interested, the deadline to apply is November 29.

### **Advancing Aging Network Capacity to Support Family, Kinship, and Tribal Family Caregivers: Financial and Workplace Security**

This [grant opportunity](#) from the Administration for Community Living enables one organization to create and disseminate information, resources, and training to state, area, and local units on

aging at a national level with an emphasis on how to strengthen the financial and workplace security of family caregivers. If interested, the deadline to apply is December 10 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

### **Let's TALK: Improving Healthcare Communication**

Improving health communication and effective methods like teach-back can help patients make well-informed decisions about their care. The Indian Health Service (IHS) Health Literacy Workgroup produced *Let's TALK*, a tool designed to improve communication between providers and patients. Visit the [IHS Healthcare Communication website](#) to learn how to implement *Let's Talk* in your practice, assess health literacy with your patients, and implement the teach-back method to improve health outcomes in your community.

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## **NHPCO PODCAST**

### **Episode Four of the NHPCO Podcast, Advancements in Palliative Care, Out Now**

On [Episode Four of the NHPCO Podcast](#), host Madison Summers sits down with Rory Farrand, NHPCO's VP of Palliative and Advanced Care to discuss the latest developments in the field of palliative care including the community-based demonstration model and reimbursement methods for the interdisciplinary model of care. In Rory's words, "if you've seen one palliative program, you've seen one palliative program!" Listen to the full episode here, or through the podcast streaming platform of your choice. Do you have a question that you'd like to hear addressed in a future episode? Email Madison Summers at [podcast@nhpco.org](mailto:podcast@nhpco.org).

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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:

- **Development/Public Relations/Marketing Open Office Hours** – Calling all outreach, marketing, development, and public relations folks! Ever feel like you're working on your own out there? Ever wish you had someone to bounce questions and ideas off of? The Development/Public Relations/Marketing Peer Group of MyNHPCO is hosting their first [Open Office Hours on November 7 at 1 p.m. ET](#). Come and bring your questions, tough situations, brilliant inspirations, and successes. Meet with your peers and network. Let's help each other grow!
- **On This Journey: Spiritual Caregiving When the Unexpected Happens** – What does spiritual caregiving look like when we are challenged by unexpected events in the lives of our patients and families like the sudden death of a caregiver or a patient significantly outliving a family's expected timeframe? Join the Spiritual Caregiver Community [chat on November 8 from 3-4 p.m. ET](#) to discuss the importance of spiritual caregiving when unexpected situations take place in the lives of patients and families.
- **How to Curate Your Hospice Story by Defining Your Leadership Vision** – Join the MyNHPCO CEO/Executive Director Community [chat on November 14 at 1 p.m. ET](#) to discuss and identify five creative strategies to illustrate core values and advance the impact of your leadership story. This innovative conversation will demonstrate ways to promote professional development and increase participation among new hospice leaders serving in clinical and public relations roles. The chat will also cover how to curate your professional values in writing your vision statement as well as innovative approaches to fostering high-quality performance among all members of the hospice team.
- **Hospice Care Plans: Part II** – Join the MyNHPCO QAPI Steering Committee on November 14 at 3 p.m. ET for a follow-up discussion to the July chat focused on best practices for hospice care planning. Presenters will address questions and comments that weren't

addressed at the [Back to Basics: Rethinking Hospice Care Plans chat](#) as well as any new questions attendees bring.

- **Volunteer Management Mentorship** – Register for the [MyNHPCO Volunteer Management Community chat](#) on November 15 at 3 p.m. ET to discuss the MyNHPCO Volunteer Management mentorship program. We will answer questions, go over the application and mentorship processes, and provide an overview of the benefits to being a mentor or mentee.
- **Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group** – Don't forget to register for the MyNHPCO Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group, focusing on spiritual care leadership and mentoring. The group provides a safe space for professional guidance, performance enhancement and development discussion, mentorship, leadership direction, and overall support to all clinicians who provide spiritual care in an interdisciplinary setting. [Register for the support group](#) on November 16 at 3:30 p.m. ET.

### Chat Recordings Now Available

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

- **When the Death is in Your Family: Supporting the Grieving Hospice Worker** – [MyNHPCO Social Workers Community Chat](#)
- **Regulatory Update on Recent Medicare Rules** – [MyNHPCO Finance/Information Systems Community Chat](#)
- **Staffing in 2023, Challenges, and Solutions** – [MyNHPCO Clinical and Operations Management Community Chat](#)
- **Honoring The Grief of Veterans and Their Families** – [MyNHPCO Bereavement Professional Community Chat](#)

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.