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Leading Person-Centered Care



NEWSBRIEFS

NOVEMBER 16, 2023



“Why Optum?”

Discover what other hospices have to say... [Learn more >](#)

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

TOP STORIES

NHPCO-NAHC Collaboration Town Hall Recording

As NHPCO and NAHC continue exploring deeper collaboration and possibly combining the two organizations, we are sharing updates on our respective [websites](#) and via a series of Town Hall meetings with members. If you missed the first Town Hall yesterday, you can [watch the video](#). Future updates will be shared at www.nhpco.org/nahc-collaboration and www.nahc.org/nhpco-collaboration.



CMS Held Hospice November Forum

On November 14, CMS held a webinar to share updates on the Hospice Quality Reporting Program with a focus on hospice provisions in the calendar year (CY) 2024 [Home Health Prospective Payment System final rule](#). In this webinar, CMS discussed the final hospice special focus program (SFP) and informal dispute resolution process. NHPCO will be following up with CMS for clarification regarding timing and implementation of the SFP set to begin in 2024. The recording and slides will be available shortly on the [CMS website](#). For general questions, reach out to CMSQualityTeam@ketchum.com.

NHPCO 2024 Membership – Save Time and Renew Online!

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. Membership renewals are underway; our goal is to make your renewal process as seamless as possible, and we thank you for engaging early. You can expect your NHPCO Renewal Packet in the mail soon if you have not yet received it already but you can start the process now online by visiting nhpco.org/renew. If you have any questions, please contact solutions@nhpco.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 17: [Regulatory Office Hours](#)

November 28: Chat – [The Data-Driven Hospice](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

CMS Finalizes Hospice IDG Changes in CY 2024 Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule

On November 3, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the [calendar year \(CY\) 2024 Payment Policies under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Changes to Part B Payment and Coverage Policies](#) final rule, which implements provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, to include mental health counselors (MHCs) and marriage and family therapists (MFTs) as part of the hospice interdisciplinary group (IDG) beginning January 1, 2024. Consistent with NHPCO's recommendation, CMS will only require hospices to include one social worker, one MFT, or one MHC on the IDG – not all three. For more information, see NHPCO's detailed [regulatory alert](#).

CMS to Host Home Health, Hospice, and DME Open Door Forum

CMS will host the next Home Health, Hospice, and DME Open Door Forum on Wednesday, November 29 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. ET. CMS will discuss the CY 2024 Home Health final rule, CY 2024 Physician Fee Schedule final rule, and quality reporting. The Open Door Forum is a great opportunity to ask CMS questions. CMS has changed the format to a Zoom meeting, so you must [register to attend](#).

Upcoming Regulatory Office Hours – November 17

The next Regulatory Office Hours will be held on Friday, November 17. Office Hours are an opportunity to chat with the NHPCO Regulatory Committee in an open forum and to ask regulatory questions and learn from others' experiences and best practices. [Register and submit questions](#) through the Regulatory & Compliance Center. A recording of the meeting will be available on the [Regulatory Office Hours page](#).

OIG Releases New General Compliance Program Guidance

On November 6, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (OIG) released the [General Compliance Program Guidance \(GCPC\)](#). The GCPC is voluntary guidance for healthcare stakeholders on compliance risks and programs and includes information on Federal law, program infrastructure, and other resources. For more information on compliance, review NHPCO's [Program Integrity page](#).

OIG Releases New Report on Use of Medicare Data to Identify Potential Abuse and Neglect

On November 7, the Department of Health and Human Services OIG released a report titled ['CMS Can Do More To Leverage Medicare Claims Data To Identify Unreported Incidents of Potential Abuse or Neglect.'](#) This report discusses findings from an audit of Medicare claims to identify cases of potential abuse or neglect. CMS concurred with OIG recommendations, noting the agency would prioritize state agency survey and complaint oversight, develop additional guidance for providers, and evaluate all available evidence pertaining to abuse and neglect when assessing revisions to provider conditions of participation. For more information, [read the full report](#).

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

NHPCO Collecting Signatures for Rural Letter to Congress

NHPCO is collecting organizational signatures from rural and frontier providers for a letter to Congress. This letter is intended to highlight the issues rural and frontier providers are facing and to begin partnership with Congress on these issues. [Review the letter and sign on](#) by Wednesday, November 29.

If you are interested in getting more involved with rural provider issues, volunteer to be a member of the rural community steering committee. All disciplines are welcome as well as individuals who

have not participated in NHPCO leadership roles previously. Email Alix Ware at aware@nhpco.org with a short introduction.

QUALITY

HQRP Updates

CMS HQRP Hospice Outreach September 2023: On September 19, CMS posted a [Hospice Outreach Email](#) with important updates on the HQRP, including compliance reminders, HQRP webpage updates, and links to HQRP trainings. Providers are strongly encouraged to download the Outreach Email and sign up for [Quality Reporting Updates](#). If you would like to receive these quarterly update emails, reach out to QRPHelp@swingtech.com with your organization's name, CCN, and desired email contacts.

Care Compare November Refresh: Care Compare will refresh during November. Updates will include HIS, CAHPS®, and Claims-Based measures. Star ratings will not refresh until February. Per the [CY 2024 Home Health Prospective Payment Update Rule](#), data from November 2023 will be used to identify the pool of hospices eligible for the Hospice Special Focus Program. Members are encouraged to visit the [NHPCO Regulatory and Compliance Center](#) for more information.

Demographic Corrections: On September 26, CMS added a new page to the HQRP website, [How to Update Hospice Demographic Data](#), which provides updated instructions for providers to request demographic corrections on Care Compare. Members seeking demographic corrections are encouraged to review the new page as well as the [HQRP Quarterly Q&A for Q2 2023](#) for more information. Please reach out to quality@nhpco.org if your organization has requested demographic corrections via the updated process.

Catch Up on Measures of Excellence

Although data submission deadlines have passed for Quarters one through three, if your organization is still interested in submitting MOE data, please reach out to moe@nhpco.org

About MOE: [Measures of Excellence \(MOE\)](#) is a quarterly data collection tool and dashboard that organizations may use to track operational and clinical data to inform high quality care. The quarterly MOE Dashboard allows organizations to compare themselves to others for benchmarking and the MOE National Report provides data that supports a comprehensive review of national participant performance. The MOE Dashboard and National Report are exclusive NHPCO member benefits.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference

The 2024 NHPCO Virtual Interdisciplinary Conference (IDC2024) is the premier conference for hospice and palliative care teams and individuals. Live, online events occur from 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!

Online Learning Courses Available

NHPCO's online learning covers a variety of topics including the latest in clinical, regulatory, and palliative care. Access popular presentations and bring nationally acclaimed speakers directly to your organization for a fraction of the cost. Our courses are specifically designed to provide new insights and information to ensure the delivery of high-quality hospice and palliative care.

- **Integrated Care Management Certificate Program** - This course was created in collaboration with Sutter Health. The program reviews the Integrated Care Management (ICM) model which is a person-centered, evidence-based care delivery model that provides care coordination and support across providers, settings, and time. This course also shows how the ICM model relies on highly functional teams that place the individual at the center in order to achieve great health results. [Sign up now!](#)
- **End-of-Life Healthcare Considerations for LGBTQ+ Individuals** - This course focuses on unique healthcare considerations of LGBTQ+ individuals at the end of life and suggestions for adjustments to clinical practice to meet their needs. Participants learn about the differences among sex, gender, and gender course, healthcare disparities for LGBTQ+ adults, and how their clinical practice can be adapted to meet the needs of these patients. This course also addresses how to make your hospice a safe place for LGBTQ+ people to be their authentic selves. [Sign up now!](#)
- **Survey Priorities, Reform, Readiness, and Response** - This three-part course focuses on survey priorities, reform, readiness, and response that hospice leaders and staff need to consider. In the first module, faculty discuss the pivotal role team members play in the areas of hospice documentation, pandemic response, and infection control. The next module focuses on the regulations resulting from CY 2022 Home Health final rule and how it reforms the hospice survey process and enforcement remedies. The final module helps hospices prepare for the survey process with a firsthand account. [Sign up now!](#)

Explore our full [online course catalog](#) to see a variety of topics in a self-paced environment.

PALLIATIVE & ADVANCED CARE

Last 2023 Office Hours: December 8, 12 p.m. ET

What went well with your palliative program this year? What changes are you anticipating in 2024? We would love to wrap up the year with you, as well as talk about what may be coming in the new year. As always, bring your questions, comments, ideas, and curious mindset to our diverse faculty and peer group ready to chat with you. All NHPCO members are welcome. Registration is required but preparing an "official question" is not! [Sign up today.](#)

New PCNOW Fast Fact #473: Responding to Medical Conspiracy Theories

As we look forward to spending time with friends and loved ones this holiday season, [PCNOW's Fast Fact #473](#) will help you navigate the conversation disruptors at your holiday table or work party. Arm yourselves with helpful communication strategies for successful ways to respond to medical conspiracy theories without shutting down dialogue. Check out the [full library of PCNOW's helpful facts.](#)

Research Invitation

NHPCO has been invited to share a survey related to the role of social workers in palliative cancer care. Researchers are hoping to uncover information about experiences of palliative care and perceptions of interdisciplinary collaboration in cancer settings. Participation requires a 30–45-minute interview over Zoom, with a thirty-dollar Amazon gift card as a thank you. Individuals who are interested can [sign up here.](#)

WE HONOR VETERANS

Recording Now Available: Deborah Grassman's Dare to Forgive: A Self-Liberating Process

Missed the live webinar? Want a refresher? Watch a recording of [Dare to Forgive: A Self-Liberating Process](#) presented by Deborah Grassman with input from Angie Snyder and Ralph Ozmun. In this webinar, Deborah explores how to apply the forgiveness process with particular attention to utilization with Veterans at the end of life. More information on Opus Peace and Deborah Grassman's work can also be found on the We Honor Veterans [Opus Peace](#) webpage.

We Honor Veterans Partner Portal Closure for Maintenance - December 1 through January 8

The We Honor Veterans Partner Portal will be closed for maintenance beginning December 1 at 11:59 p.m. The portal will reopen on January 8 at 8 a.m. During this time, partner sign-ups and report submissions will be unavailable. All partners with Level 5 reports due in December will receive an extension through January 31. This necessary closure for maintenance will enable the portal's optimal functioning and ensure that partners and the public have access to the most up to date information available. We apologize for this inconvenience and thank you for your patience during this time. Please reach out to wehonorveterans@nhpco.org with any questions.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Project ECHO: Equity Where It Matters

Evaluation and Knowledge Check: If you attended the November 16 session, "Cross-Cultural Variation in Grief and Mourning," 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 with any questions.

Upcoming Session: Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families have unique needs. [Join us](#) on Thursday, December 7 at 3 p.m. ET for, "The Unique Needs of Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Hospice and Palliative Care," where presenters will describe the characteristics of the adult IDD population and share about their health and health outcomes. Through case studies, presenters will discuss the challenges to advance care planning and the provision of hospice and palliative care services in this population. Finally, presenters will share principles and practical tips for caring for this population.

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.

Hearst Foundations Health Grants

This [grant](#) from the Hearst Foundations provides program support and capital funding to regional medical facilities providing access to healthcare for low-income populations, rural populations, and Veterans. If you are interested in applying for this grant, applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

HHS Environmental Justice Community Innovator Challenge

This [challenge grant](#) from the **HHS Office of Minority Health** seeks Tribal and community-led strategies to address health disparities in Tribes and communities disproportionately burdened by environmental and climate change-related hazards. If interested, the deadline to apply for Phase 1 Deadline is January 30, 2024.

Leveraging Partnerships and Data to Improve Rural Health and Well-Being

Rural communities face challenges such as healthcare provider shortages, lower overall incomes, food insecurity, and other barriers that require unique approaches tailored to each community to help address healthcare access problems. The [Leveraging Partnerships and Data to Improve Rural Health and Well-Being](#) guide for rural practitioners and other community partners covers service models in rural communities, measuring goals, partner identification, and finding and using the best data to identify problems and track outcomes.

NHPCO PODCAST

Season 2, Episode 5 - "Courageous Conversations"

A new NHPCO Podcast episode, Season 2, Episode 5 "Courageous Conversations" is out now! Each November, we celebrate National Hospice and Palliative Care Month; a time to honor and recognize the importance of these types of care and engage in courageous conversations with our loved ones and peers. On today's episode, host Madison Summers sits down with two NHPCO members to discuss their personal hospice stories and how difficult conversations led to their current roles in the hospice field. [Listen now.](#)

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:

- Join the MyNHPCO Finance/Information Systems Community chat on Tuesday, November 28 at 2 p.m. ET for [The Data-Driven Hospice](#). Presenters will share how to harness the power of data to transform your hospice's quality, growth, productivity, financials, and employee retention. Attendees will learn what measures matter and how to use them in their agency.

Chat Recordings Now Available

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

- **DPRM Open Office Hours** – [MyNHPCO Development/PR/Marketing Community Chat](#)
- **On This Journey: Spiritual Caregiving When the Unexpected Happens** – [MyNHPCO Spiritual Caregiver Community Chat](#)
- **How to Curate Your Hospice Story by Defining Your Leadership Vision** – [MyNHPCO CEO/Executive Director Community Chat](#)
- **Hospice Care Plans: Part II** – [MyNHPCO QAPI Community Chat](#)
- **Mentor/Mentee Program: Cultivating Strong Volunteer Coordinators** – [MyNHPCO Volunteer Management 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.