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

TOP STORIES

Next Generation Leadership Council Launches Mentorship Toolkit

Give the gift of mentorship this holiday season! The NHPCO Next Generation Leadership Council's new Mentorship Toolkit is intended to be a turnkey, step-by-step guide for developing a mentorship program at your organization. Mentorship programs promote inclusion, workplace satisfaction, and employee growth and retention. Members, [download your free toolkit](#).



CMS Hosts Hospice Open Door Forum

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) hosted a Home Health, Hospice, and DME Open Door Forum (ODF) on Wednesday, November 29. During the call, CMS announced the agency is putting together a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document to address common questions concerning the inclusion of the marriage and family therapist (MFT) and mental health counselors (MHC) on the hospice interdisciplinary group (IDG). CMS stated hospices are not required to have an MFT or MHC on staff but, if they do, a qualified MFT and MHC must be employed as a W2 employee or volunteer. In addition, hospices have the choice between MFT or MHC to select for an IDG. Other topics discussed included reminders about available resources on the [CMS HQRP: Provider and Stakeholder Engagement](#) webpage and an overview of Care Compare preview reports and refresh dates.

A recording and transcript will be available on [the ODF website](#) soon. Members are encouraged to sign up for the [CMS ODF Mailing List](#) to receive future communications regarding Open Door Forums.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 5: Chat – [Palliative Rehab: An Oxymoron or Best Practice? A Panel Discussion](#)

December 5: [We Honor Veterans Office Hours](#)

December 6: Chat – [Grief Support and The Holidays](#)

December 7: Project ECHO – [The Unique Needs of Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Hospice and Palliative Care](#)

December 8: [Membership Orientation Call](#)

December 12: Chat – [End-of-Life Doulas and the Hospice Team](#)

December 13: [Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group](#)

December 13: [We Honor Veterans Partner Networking Call](#)

REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

Physician Medicare Enrollment Requirements for Hospice Certification to Begin May 1, 2024

Beginning May 1, 2024, CMS will require hospice certifying physicians to either be enrolled in or validly opted-out of the Medicare program to certify hospice services. This requirement will apply to both the hospice physician throughout the recertification process *and* the attending physician (if the patient has one) at the time of initial certification. As only physicians can certify a patient's terminal illness under the Medicare hospice benefit, this requirement does not extend to non-physician practitioners designated as a patient's attending physician. Hospices may verify the Medicare enrollment status of a physician through CMS' [Ordering and Referring Data File \(ORDF\)](#). For more information, reach out to regulatory@nhpco.org.

Updated CMS 855A Enrollment Form Now Available

The Office of Management and Budget recently revised Form CMS-855A, 'Medicare Enrollment Application for Institutional Providers,' to include additional ownership information among other changes. CMS began accepting submissions of the [revised form](#) on November 17, 2023. Providers may continue using the prior version of the enrollment form through December 17, 2023. After this time, the revised enrollment form must be used. For additional information, see CMS' [MLN Fact Sheet](#), 'New Ownership Reporting Requirements for Providers Using the Form CMS-855A.' For calendar year 2024, CMS [announced](#) a \$709 application fee for newly enrolling or revalidating institutional providers or those with new practice locations.

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 **Friday, December 8**. If you are interested in getting more involved with rural provider issues, volunteer to be a member of the rural community steering committee. We welcome all disciplines 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

- Publicly reported hospice quality data has been refreshed on [Care Compare](#). Quality measures updated with the November 2023 refresh include: Hospice Item Set Comprehensive Assessment Measure, CAHPS® Hospice Survey Family Caregiver Experience, Hospice Care Index, and Hospice Visits in Last Days of Life. NHPCO members should access the [Quality Alerts and Updates](#) webpage to download the complete Quality Alert (dated 11/22/23) for more information.
- Providers can now access February 2024 Provider Preview Reports in their CASPER folders. The preview period lasts from November 15, 2023 to December 15, 2023, although reports will be available for an additional 30 days after the preview period ends. CMS encourages providers to download and save their Hospice Provider Preview Reports for future reference, as they will no longer be available in CASPER after this 60-day period. For more information about preview reports, visit the [CMS HQRP](#) webpage.
- CAHPS Size Exemptions for hospices that served fewer than 50 survey-eligible decedents in 2023 are due no later than December 31, 2023. For more information, visit the [CMS HQRP: CAHPS Survey](#) webpage.

Catch Up on Measures of Excellence

Data Submission: Although data submission deadlines have passed for Quarters 1-3, if your organization is still interested in submitting MOE data, please reach out to moe@nhpco.org.

MOE User Updates: Remember to check your submissions by quarter and year (using the dashboard filters) to ensure that there are no duplicate submissions for the year. Please reach out to moe@nhpco.org for assistance as needed.

About MOE: The [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 & DEVELOPMENT

ALC2023: On-Demand Content Still Available!

Live events for the 2023 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference (ALC2023) have concluded; thank you to all who attended. Participants enjoyed four incredible keynotes, engaging live educational sessions, and meaningful opportunities to connect with peers. Feeling like you missed out? It's not too late! [Register now](#) to gain access to the full on-demand content library through December 31, 2023. Three keynote recordings and 14 concurrent session recordings from the live conference events have also been added to the on-demand library. Attendees can view a broad selection of content and earn CE/CME credit.

2024 Hospice Manager Development Program Schedule

The Hospice Manager Development Program (MDP) 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. This dynamic training and development program provides access to national hospice experts and peers in hospice management. Level I and II courses are [now open for registration](#). Visit the Hospice MDP [Upcoming Courses schedule](#) for more information, rates, and registration.

More to come in 2024:

- [Hospice MDP Foundational Course](#): January 29 – March 11
- [Managing the Changing Organization](#): February 12 – March 11

WE HONOR VETERANS

We Honor Veterans Partner Networking Call

Join us for the final 2023 WHV Partner Networking Call on December 13 from 3-4 p.m. ET. Attendees will be updated on the most recent news from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, and WHV partners. We look forward to welcoming Jessica Benson of Mynd Immersive Virtual Reality and Dr. Qwynn Galloway-Salazar, Army Veteran, end-of-life doula, and founder of In Their Honor, LLC, to provide exciting insight into how the work they are doing is relevant to WHV partners. [Register here!](#)

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

The We Honor Veterans Partner Portal will be closed for maintenance beginning December 1 at 11:59 p.m. ET. The portal will reopen on January 8 at 8 a.m. ET. 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.

MEMBER UPDATES

NHPCO 2024 Membership Renewal

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 underway. You should have received a physical mailing from NHPCO with your membership renewal packet. You can also renew online by visiting nhpco.org/renew. If you have any questions, please contact solutions@nhpco.org.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & 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 the [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 we will describe the characteristics of the adult IDD population and share about their health and health outcomes. Through case studies, we will discuss the challenges to advance care planning and the provision of hospice and palliative care services in this population. Finally, we will share some 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.

Publication: U.S. Playbook to Address Social Determinants of Health

The White House recently released its first ever [U.S. Playbook to Address Social Determinants of Health](#). The playbook lays out an initial set of actions agencies are taking to collaborate and support equitable health outcomes across communities. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released the [HHS Call to Action: Addressing Health-Related Social Needs in Communities Across the Nation](#) to accompany the release of this playbook. The call to action asks partners across healthcare, social care, public and environmental health, government, and health information technology organizations to take action to promote system transformation and collaboration.

Building Equity, Serving BIPOC LGBTQ+ Communities Training Series

This [training from AIDS United](#) provides healthcare professionals with the tools needed to build health equity in their practices and provide culturally competent care to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) LGBTQ+ communities.

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:

- **Palliative Rehab: An Oxymoron or Best Practice? A Panel Discussion** - Join the MyNHPCO [Integrative and Rehabilitation Therapies Community](#) on Tuesday, December 5 at 2 p.m. ET for a panel discussion on rehabilitation therapies in the context of palliative care. During this chat, panelists will discuss enhancing collaboration between palliative care and rehabilitation teams or hospice interdisciplinary teams. They will help attendees understand, and be able to speak to, the role each rehab team member plays in improving quality of life for seriously-ill people and their families.
- **Grief Support and the Holidays** - [You're invited](#) to the MyNHPCO Bereavement Professional Community chat on Wednesday, December 6 at 2 p.m. ET. We'll examine the interplay of grief and the holiday season and provide practical suggestions and programs that support the bereaved at the "most wonderful time of the year."
- **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 the benefits of NHPCO membership. Join the Membership team on 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 [December 8 orientation call](#).
- **End-of-Life Doulas and the Hospice Team** - You're invited to the inaugural MyNHPCO [End-of-Life Doula \(EOLD\) Community](#) Chat on Tuesday, December 12 at 1 p.m. ET where participants will gain a greater understanding of the EOLD role, their scope of practice, and how they may complement the hospice interdisciplinary team. There will also be information on how to integrate this role, in various ways, into your hospice's model of care.
- **Spiritual Caregiver Community Peer-Led Support Group** - Don't forget to register for the MyNHPCO Spiritual Caregiver Community peer-led support group on [Thursday, December 14 at 3:30 p.m. ET](#) for a peer-led support group with a focus on spiritual care leadership and mentoring. Mentors will offer a safe space for guidance, to enhance professional performance and development, provide mentoring and leadership direction, and support all clinicians who provide spiritual care in an interdisciplinary setting.

Chat Recordings Now Available

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

- **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](#)
- **The Data-Driven Hospice** – [MyNHPCO Finance/Information Systems 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.