

OIG and Program Integrity

Key Messages for NHPCO Members

09/18/19

Following the release of the [reports on hospice care](#) by the Office of the Inspector General in July 2019, NHPCO provides the following messages that all providers committed to the highest quality of care should be review.

Main Messages:

1. We are called to care for people at their most vulnerable time. Providing end-of-life care is an enormous responsibility but also one of our profession's greatest privileges. We are committed to ensuring that every patient and family we care for experiences the best of what humankind has to offer.
2. It is important for patients and their loved ones to know hospice providers are committed to quality, compassionate, person-centered care for those nearing the end of life – not only for the patient but also for family members as well.
3. The isolated, outlier incidents of poor-quality hospice care uncovered by the OIG are troubling and inexcusable.
4. These isolated incidents are not reflective of the broader hospice community, the care provided, or the values that define our philosophy of person and family-centered care.
5. As in all healthcare provider sectors, we too recognize that additional action is justified and warranted to ensure these rare but unacceptable instances of poor quality are prevented before they happen.
6. The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization along with members of the hospice community are working proactively, collaboratively and constructively with Congress and federal regulators on reforms to increase oversight, education, and transparency.

As a Provider, Can You Answer:

- Our hospice program demonstrates our commitment to high-quality care through:
[provide examples such as high patient satisfaction surveys, new compliance programs, staff education initiatives, staff certification, organization accreditation, transparency initiatives, etc.]

NHPCO's Commitment to Patients and Families:

- To ensure we continue delivering on those promises, NHPCO supports the following program integrity reforms:

OVERSIGHT: We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to simplify and streamline the hospice benefit and compliance process to ensure taxpayer resources are spent wisely. More oversight of new and poor-performing hospice providers would protect the most vulnerable from unacceptable and avoidable abuse, while easing unnecessary governmental red tape on honest and law-abiding hospice providers so they can continue to provide high-quality, person-centered care. Accountability leads to credibility. Our goal is to ensure patients and their families have the utmost confidence in their hospice program.

EDUCATION: Professional education and training for staff and volunteers is a commitment that must be part of every hospice organization's culture. High-quality care, regulatory compliance, and clinical quality and excellence require ongoing education. Professionals must receive adequate training to provide the unique aspects of hospice care at the highest-level.

TRANSPARENCY: Patients and family members must be confident that a hospice will provide high-quality, interdisciplinary care and they should be able to access reliable data that informs the choices they make. Information about the hospice experience should be available to patients, families and other consumers through an enhanced Hospice Compare or similar tool designed to support decision making.

Download NHPCO's [Program Integrity Initiatives](#).