



# IHO Update

*Bi-weekly News for Hospice Professionals in Iowa*

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August 3, 2007

## **IHO Fall Conference Registration Coming Soon**

Mark your calendars now for October 24-25, 2007 to attend the IHO Fall Conference at The Scheman Building in Ames, Iowa. A few topics that will be presented in more than 25 breakout sessions include leadership, quality, hospice education, spirituality, communications/marketing, and symptom management. As part of the honored volunteer recognition ceremony, a special presentation and performance will be given by a member of The Threshold Choir, who sings at the bedsides of people who are struggling – whether living or dying.

Keynoters include Judi Lund Person, from NHPCO, to discuss the 10 Components of Quality Care. Ann Corley will focus on, “The Helping Relationship: Staying Healthy-Staying Balanced,” and Sally Baskey will end the conference with “Laughter: My Drug of Choice!”

### **IHO Poster Presentations:**

The deadline has been extended to **September 1** to submit a poster presentation application in celebration of IHO’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the Fall Conference. Presentation applications have been sent to all hospice directors and are also available on the IHO Web site at [www.iowahospice.org](http://www.iowahospice.org) under the “Calendar” Tab. Please submit only *one* application per agency location. For questions, contact Natalie Wilson, IHO, at 515.243.1046.

### **Honored Volunteer Recognition Deadline Nears**

**August 10** is the deadline to submit a nomination form for that certain volunteer or volunteer team in your agency that goes the extra mile and sets a positive example for all volunteers. The honored volunteer recognition ceremony will begin the day on October 24. A special ceremony will be held with recognition, music and storytelling. Please visit the Web site at [www.iowahospice.org](http://www.iowahospice.org) under the “Awards and Recognition Tab” to download a nomination form. Download the form on the Web site and mail or fax back to IHO. \*New this year, please provide an electronic photo of the nominated volunteer. Photos will be included in a special slideshow at the ceremony. Check the nomination form for further details.

## **IHO Benchmarking Project—Next Steps**

All Iowa Hospice Organization member agencies are asked to complete the online data collection survey that will be finalized and online next week. This survey is among the efforts underway by IHO to enhance the quality of hospice care in Iowa as well as assist

members in preparing for the expected changes forthcoming in the hospice conditions of participation. Those members attending the regional meetings in late June led by Martha Tecca with OCS/PeerForum provided the initial input for the survey along with IHO members who volunteered to be on the Iowa Benchmarking Advisory Group (IBAG).

#### *Online Data Survey.*

All directors of IHO member hospices will be receiving an email from OCS/PeerForum next week announcing the online survey and providing the user ID and password for the agency to use. It was originally planned to have a separate survey to gather feedback on the data points. However, the final survey has embedded those questions so there is just one. This initial survey will be for July data. Agencies are encouraged to submit whatever data they have even if they do not have all the data requested.

#### *Data Collection Support.*

The OCS QAPI Help Desk and Frances Hoffman will provide data collection support. Contact information for both will be included in the survey. In addition, Frances and IBAG members will be following up with non-respondents to encourage submission.

Participation in this online survey is free for all IHO member agencies.

## **Marking a New Era for Quality End-of-Life Care: NHPCO's Quality Partners Initiative**

*Iowa Hospice Organization is an integral partner in NHPCO's new initiative, Quality Partner, and will work collaboratively with NHPCO to launch Quality Partners. Two years in the making, this campaign encompasses 10 key components of quality that providers will be asked to affirm. The IHO Update will begin to feature articles in upcoming issues in the hopes to familiarize members with the initiative as well as explain its key concepts and put them in a helpful context for hospice and palliative care professionals.*

### **What Do We Mean by Quality?**

The actual quality of the care given by America's hospice and palliative care providers was a major theme and focus of NHPCO's recent Clinical Team Conference, held April 25-28 in San Diego, CA. In her plenary address, NHPCO board member Dr. Diane Meier, director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, reviewed the major national initiatives now promoting quality in this area, including the National Quality Forum and NHPCO's spectrum of quality tools and measures. She also summarized evidence for how our industry is doing overall on six primary domains of quality health care identified by the Institute of Medicine in 2001.\* Other conference sessions addressed the state of end-of-life quality measurement and looming requirements contained in Medicare's new Conditions of Participation for hospices.

Dr. Meier, in her plenary address, acknowledged the challenge of defining quality, beyond the most basic level of "I know it when I see it." If patients and families are to rely upon

consistent, reliable high-quality care from their hospice and palliative care providers, there has to be a way to clearly define quality, assess it, measure it, compare it and improve it, she explained. Providers need a way to *quantify* quality. That requires measures that are simple, inexpensive, easy to use, and connected to actual quality of care — not just paper exercises to satisfy external regulators.

What, then, is quality? It can be understood as desired health outcomes, as defined by the recipients of health care. Obviously, we know quality when we see it, even if we don't always agree on its hallmarks. Hospice professionals receive verbal expressions of gratitude while standing at the grocery checkout line and thank-you letters from bereaved families to indicate that they provided a valued service. But is that enough? Most quality experts say no — because it does not document actual outcomes of service or offer a basis for comparison between providers. The thing that's missing in this rule-of-thumb view of quality is *consistency* — providing the same high level of care to every patient and family.

“Some hospice people don't yet understand that payment eventually will be attached to quality measurement. That will be a tremendous motivator, beyond the desire to satisfy yourself and prove to yourself that your contributions to the lives of patients and families are the best they can be and continually getting better,” says NHPCO president Donald Schumacher. “The real excitement of a commitment to quality is in your relationship with your patients and families and your community. Demonstrating your commitment to quality will also go a long way toward lifting employee morale and job satisfaction, Schumacher explains.

### **Understanding Quality Example**

Evidence for these high hopes comes from Susan Fuglie, CEO of Hospice of the Red River Valley, a well-regarded rural hospice based in Fargo, ND, and a member of NHPCO's Quality Advisory Council. “Our agency had just been doing the minimum required for accreditation and certification,” Fuglie reports. “We never changed anything we did based on what we monitored for quality improvement. Our staff understood QA and QI as necessary evils for compliance but not anything meaningful or relevant to their jobs. We didn't know what quality really was and we didn't know that we didn't know.”

A discussion with the agency's Board of Directors about future Medicare quality requirements for hospices led to an offer by a board member to teach the agency about how quality is understood in the rest of the healthcare system.

“Suddenly, there was a huge, collective ‘aha’ in the organization. Quality isn't just a nuisance but an opportunity for improvement—and everyone can benefit from improved outcomes. That may seem terribly obvious, but when your hands are full with all of the other things you have to do in this job, it can get overlooked. What we discovered is that this is a remarkable opportunity, not just to improve the quality of care for our patients, but to improve the lives of our clinicians.”

The topic for the first quality improvement cycle was how to meet the needs of patients and families for home health aide services when there aren't enough aide hours to go around. "Staff had been frustrated with this issue for years. As we started peeling back the layers, we ran into glitches in our policy and practices right from the start. As people began to identify the barriers, they saw that the problems were fixable," Fuglie relates. "I've never seen our staff so enthusiastic. They are starting to see that things are going to work, and that's where the real buy-in comes. They already have a long list of things that need improving."

*(This article first appeared in NHPCO's monthly publication, NewsLine, July 2006.)*

\* *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health Care System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.* Institute of Medicine, 2001.

## **Working Together to Improve Pain Management**

Mercy Medical Center and Iowa Health System in Des Moines are partnering together to host two pain conferences. The first conference on Sept. 6 from 4-8 p.m. at the Mercy East Tower Auditorium will focus on pediatric pain management and sedation, pain management challenges with the sleep apnea patient, and neuropathic pain. The second conference will be held on Sept. 17 from 4:30-8:30 p.m. at the Kelley Conference Room at Iowa Methodist Medical Center. This conference will discuss current medication therapies for pain management, CAM therapies in pain management, and meeting acute pain needs in patients with chronic pain. For more information and to register, see the brochure enclosed with this week's *IHO Update*.

## **Incorrect Payment of Hospice Physician Services**

Hospice claims submitted with HCPCS codes for physician's services are paying incorrectly. For claims with dates of service January 1, 2007 and later, the HCPCS codes are being paid at the 2006 rates, rather than the appropriate 2007 rates. The problem has been identified and reported to our data center.

After the problem is corrected, mass adjustments will be done to those claims which processed incorrectly. Updates on the status of this issue will be posted to the Claims Processing Issues Web page, [https://www.cahabagba.com/part\\_a/claims/processing\\_issues.htm](https://www.cahabagba.com/part_a/claims/processing_issues.htm).

For questions, please use the "Contact Us" page at [www.cahabagba.com](http://www.cahabagba.com).

## **August Cahaba Educational Opportunities**

### **August 14**

"Renal Dialysis Facility (RDF) Billing Updates." This teleconference will provide updates and information on current billing issues related to end stage renal disease (ESRD) claims. Registration deadline is August 9.

**August 15**

“Introducing the Physical Therapy Local Coverage Determination for Home Health Services” (Event will be repeated on Aug. 16). This teleconference will include information about Cahaba’s physical therapy local coverage determination (LCD), diagnosis coding issues related to the LCD, components of physical therapy documentation, and identifying resources available to home health agencies.

Registration deadline is August 9.

**August 16**

“Introducing the Physical Therapy Local Coverage Determination for Home Health Services.” This teleconference is a repeat of the August 15, 2007 teleconference. Registration deadline is August 10.

**August 22**

“Beginning Home Health Billing for New Providers or Small Providers.” This webinar will include basic education on home health billing, eligibility requirements for the home health benefit, and information about billing a home health request for anticipated payment (RAP) and final claim. Registration deadline is August 17.

**August 29**

“Hospice Beginner Billing for New Providers or Small Providers.” This webinar will include basic education on hospice billing, eligibility requirements for the hospice benefit, and information about billing a hospice notice of election and claim, including levels of care and physician’s services. Registration deadline is August 25.

For more information about these events and to register, visit the Web site at:

[https://www.cahabagba.com/apps/course\\_registration/ia/calendar.jsp](https://www.cahabagba.com/apps/course_registration/ia/calendar.jsp).

**NHPCO News**

- **NHPCO Plans for Release of Medicare CoPs**

NHPCO has begun planning for the release of the final version of the Medicare Hospice Conditions of Participation, now expected in May 2008. There will be many different ways to learn about the changes required – stay tuned for more information as the date gets closer.

- **New FHSSA Partnership**

The Hospice and Palliative Care Council of Vermont is now partnered with Iambi Lutheran Hospital in Singada, Tanzania. Iambi is one of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) hospitals that is included in the New Partners Initiative Program that FHSSA is working on in Tanzania.

- **Melissa Gilbert to Keynote NHPCO’s Clinical Conference**

In addition to her many accomplishments in the entertainment industry, Ms. Gilbert has given voice to the needs of seriously ill children and their families in her role as spokesperson and President of the Board of Directors of the Children's Hospice and Palliative Care Coalition. Ms. Gilbert will share her personal experiences in working with children and their families and she hopes participants will be inspired to develop innovative pediatric palliative care programs and join the movement to promote family centered care for children and families across the nation. The 2008 Clinical Team Conference is November 29 – December 1 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, in New Orleans LA.

- **CAPC Presents “Building Palliative Care Programs in Hospitals”**

The Center to Advance Palliative Care is hosting a seminar, “Building Palliative Care Programs in Hospitals: Tools and Strategies for Success,” in San Francisco on November 1-3, 2007. This CAPC Level I Seminar serves as a basic primer for planning, exploring, and starting a hospital-based palliative care program. Participants will get a comprehensive, practical overview of all financial and operational tools needed to build a successful program. Early Bird Registration is available through September 28. To learn more and register, visit [www.capc.org/sanfrancisco](http://www.capc.org/sanfrancisco) or call the CAPC Events Line at 212/201-2680.

### **Building Pediatric Palliative Care Best Practice Conference**

Akron, Ohio and the Ohio Pediatric Palliative and End-of-Life Care Network will host a three-day all pediatric palliative care conference on October 4-6, 2007. For more information, see the brochure enclosed with this week's *IHO Update*.

### **Enclosures**

Mercy & Iowa Health System Pain Conference Brochure  
Ohio Pediatric Palliative Care Conference Brochure

