



CLINICAL & REGULATORY UPDATE

2018-1 | January 3, 2018

The Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home supports its members in the provision of exceptional quality and accessible services through collaboration, leadership, provision of information, advocacy and education.

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HOME HEALTH

MedPAC - Yet Again - Eyes Recommending Home Health Payment Reductions

Source: HHL

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) will vote this month on whether to once again recommend a 5% Medicare payment reduction for home health agencies, as well as a two-year rebasing of the payment system.

During its Dec. 7 meeting, MedPAC discussed a draft recommendation to ask Congress to reduce Medicare payments in 2019.

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Compliance Tool: 2018 Regulatory Calendar

Source: HHL

Agencies may want to consider using the following helpful compliance calendar in 2018 as it prepares to comply with the revised CoPs and other regulatory changes.

[Click Here to Download the 2018 Regulatory Calendar Tool](#)

Can't-Miss Webinar on Avoiding Fraud and Abuse in Home Care and Hospice

Source: Press Release, Washington, D.C., December 20, 2017

The National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) are teaming up to present a webinar you won't want to miss - Fraud and Abuse in Home Care and Hospice: Understanding Risk Areas; Preparing for Review. The webinar will run from 2:00 to 3:30 PM ET on February 21, 2018.

[Click to Read Full Press Release](#)

HOSPICE

CMS Hospice Quality Updates NEW GUIDANCE on Updates/Corrections to Hospice Compare Demographic Data

On a routine basis the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issues notices to update hospices and other stakeholders of new guidance related to various elements of the Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP). In recent days, the following notices were posted online. Of particular note is the revised guidance related to corrections/ updates to a hospice's demographic data that is displayed on the Hospice Compare website. While previously hospices were instructed to report errors/changes to their ASPEN coordinator, CMS is now instructing that they be reported to the hospice's assigned Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC). Please see the notices below for additional information related to demographic data and other updates.

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MedPAC Releases Annual Hospice Assessment of Payment Adequacy and Updates

Source: NHPCO

On December 9, MedPAC commissioners heard a report from MedPAC staff on updates to the hospice utilization and margins data. 2016 facts from MedPAC:

- 49.7% of Medicare decedents, 1,427,000 Medicare beneficiaries, used hospice care
- \$16.9 billion spent in Medicare dollars
- 4,400 hospice providers in the United States today
- Average length of stay = 87.8 days
- Live discharge rate = 16.9%
- Cost report data shows routine home care (RHC) average cost at \$124 per day, compared to Medicare payment of \$159 per day
- Overall Medicare margins for hospice in 2015 were at 10%

MedPAC also recommended a 0% payment update for FY2019. NHPCO will be meeting with MedPAC in the new year to discuss data analysis and trends with MedPAC staff.

[Download a copy of the slides from the MedPAC December meeting.](#)

New Study Compares Hospice Registered Nurses Rates

Source: NAHC

Hospital-based Hospice registered nurses (RN) received the highest pay and for-profit hospice RNs received the lowest pay, according to figures from the recently-published 2017-2018 Hospice Salary & Benefits Report. The Report is published by the Hospital and Healthcare Compensation Service (HCS), in cooperation with the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC).

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Office for Civil Rights Posts Response to Opioid Crisis

Source: *NHPCO*

The Office for Civil Rights launched new tools and initiatives in response to the opioid crisis, while implementing the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114-255). Two new HIPAA webpages focused on information related to mental and behavioral health, one for [professionals](#) and another for [consumers](#). These webpages reorganize existing guidance to make it more user-friendly and provide a one-stop resource for our new guidance and materials. This guidance is an important step forward in clarifying the circumstances under which HIPAA permits a covered entity to disclose information to family members and caregivers.

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization Palliative Care Resource Series

[Click Here to Download: FINDING MEANING AND HOPE WHILE "MY BODY ENTOMBS ME": MUSIC THERAPY FOR PATIENTS WITH ALS](#)

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QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? COMMENTS?

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