



HAN

Hospice Action  
Network

# 2022 POLICY PRIORITIES

Hospice Action Network (HAN) is the advocacy affiliate of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). NHPCO is the largest membership organization representing the entire spectrum of hospice and palliative care programs and professionals in the United States. NHPCO represents over 4,000 hospice locations with thousands of hospice staff and volunteers, and 48 state hospice and palliative care organizations.

HAN is working with provider members, state organizations, other national healthcare organizations, and relevant stakeholders to advance the NHPCO legislative and regulatory agenda.

We urge Congress and the Administration to support policies that promote equitable access to high quality hospice and palliative care for patients and families in need across our communities and improve healthcare delivery.

## PROTECT CARE FOR PATIENTS & FAMILIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- **PPE, Testing, Vaccines:** Provide adequate supplies of PPE, testing and vaccines to ensure the priority and safety of frontline hospice workers and caregivers and the patients and families they serve while mitigating risk of infection in communities. This enables providers to focus their resources on ensuring uninterrupted care for all Americans facing serious or life-limiting illness.
- **Flexibilities:** Extend or make permanent flexibilities issued through legislation and regulatory waivers that enable hospice and palliative care providers to offer needed care to Americans facing serious or life-limiting illness at home or wherever they call home.
- **Bereavement Services:** Expand coverage of bereavement services offered by hospice providers that care for grieving communities in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, mass violence, and natural disasters.
- **Economic Support and Provider Relief Fund:** Ensure economic support by extending the sequestration moratorium and protecting provider relief funding for hospice and palliative care providers facing historic challenges and long-term negative impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

## MAKE MEANINGFUL REFORMS TO IMPROVE ACCESS & ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY

- **Workforce Crisis:** Address the workforce crisis faced by providers today and secure the workforce of tomorrow by increasing diverse healthcare professionals with expertise in palliative and hospice care.
- **Eligibility:** Reform the outdated six-month prognosis barrier and tie hospice eligibility to need, not an arbitrary time limit.
- **Concurrent Care:** Avoid having patients in need of hospice care make “the terrible choice” between continuing disease-specific therapies like chemotherapy and dialysis and accessing person-centered, interdisciplinary care services offered by hospice providers.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Advance health equity by removing structural barriers to high quality hospice and community-based palliative care and building trust by offering education and culturally-appropriate outreach and resources that will improve communication and increase transparency.



HAN

Hospice Action  
Network

# 2022 POLICY PRIORITIES

## INNOVATION IN SERIOUS ILLNESS CARE DELIVERY & PAYMENT

- **Community-Based Palliative Care Benefit:** Build upon the CMS Innovation Center's Medicare Care Choices Model which improved quality and produced cost savings when testing concurrent care in hospice. Determine the scope of required services that define "community-based palliative care" which is offered by an interdisciplinary team and have CMS adopt the defined services. Improve care delivery across the care continuum by covering needed community-based palliative care further upstream from hospice.
- **MA VBID Hospice Carve-In:** Fix the hospice component of the CMMI Value-Based Insurance Demonstration to ensure that the model requires consumer protections, defines required services for community-based palliative care, includes proper quality measures, and addresses operational concerns.

## PROTECT ACCESS & ENSURE QUALITY

- **Financing:** Ensure that hospice providers are able to offer the right care at the right time by securing a level of reimbursement for services that guarantees every American facing a serious or life-limiting illness access to the high-quality hospice and palliative care they deserve.
- **Quality Improvement:** Position NHPCO Quality Connections as the gold standard for providers that offer the high-quality care that all Americans facing serious and life-limiting illness deserve.
- **OIG Engagement:** Serve as the main source for the HHS Office of Inspector General by leading a national coalition to engage with the HHS OIG on issues related to hospice program audits, inspections, and evaluations.
- **Red Tape Reduction:** Ensure that resources are going directly to patient care by eliminating overly burdensome regulations that jeopardize access, while strengthening program integrity measures that promote high quality care.