

Pennsylvania Hospice Network Participates in 2-Day Intensive Workshop on New Hospice Conditions of Participation

In early June, representatives from Pennsylvania Hospice Network Board of Directors participated in a two-day intensive workshop on the new Medicare Hospice Conditions of Participation (Hospice CoPs), which were officially published in the *Federal Register* on June 5.

This is the first time that the guidelines have been significantly revised since they were created in 1983 and, at the same time, reflects a significant shift in focus for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency tasked with developing and enforcing them.

The two-day intensive workshop, which was organized by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), brought together more than 300 hospice leaders, representing 46 states. "The purpose of the meeting was to give hospice leaders a more in-depth understanding of CMS's intent behind the revisions so they, in turn, can help educate providers in their states about what is now expected—and why," said Judi Lund Person, NHPCO's vice president of regulatory and state leadership.

The new Hospice CoPs focus on providing quality patient-centered care and putting the needs of the patient and family first. Moreover, they give providers flexibility with meeting many of the new requirements in recognition of the varying challenges hospice programs face. On the other hand, providers are also being required to perform more thorough and ongoing assessments of the patient's and family's needs—and document their actions (and inactions) in accordance with the plan of care.

The new Hospice CoPs also place significant emphasis on quality assessment and performance improvement—known to many as QAPI. "What CMS is looking for," notes JoAnne Reifsnnyder, PhD, APRN, Vice President of Pennsylvania Hospital Network's Board of Directors and Research Assistant Professor, Thomas Jefferson University, is "tangible proof that programs have evaluated all aspects of their organizations and are making concerted efforts to make measureable improvements. They're not expecting that all programs will succeed every time, but want to see that changes are being made, tested and evaluated—with the ultimate goal of improvement over time."

The Pennsylvania Hospice Network sponsored four statewide workshops to help hospice administrators understand and implement the new requirements. For more information and resources refer to s the Quality Partners program and the Regulatory and Compliance Center on NHPCO's Web site: www.nhpco.org/regulatory. For information regarding this program, contact JoAnne Reifsnyder at JoAnne.Reifsnyder@jefferson.edu.

JoAnne Reifsnyder was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Hospice and Palliative Nurses' Association.