



# WE HONOR VETERANS

## Partner Networking Call 12/17/2014 Call Summary

### FEHC-V and CAHPS

#### Matthew Haskins

- CAHPS is a new survey mandated by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid services. Certain hospices which meet specific criteria will be required to use the survey by the second quarter of 2015. Those hospices using CAHPS will be required to have the survey administered by a third party vendor.
- Although it is not the same, CAHPS is very similar to FEHC and since most hospices will be required to use CAHPS, NHPCO will no longer be collecting FEHC data or distributing quarterly reports. The last date of FEHC and FEHC-V survey collection will be April 15<sup>th</sup> and the last quarterly report will be distributed at the end of April/beginning of May.
- After April, we will no longer collect data for FEHC but the survey will still be available for those hospices wishing to utilize it. Hospices can still send it out and collect their own data. We will have a data collection workbook which is similar to what has been available for FEHC-V data. You can now import both your FEHC and FEHC-V data into an excel workbook and it will give you instantaneous results for your data.
- The FEHC-V survey questions and workbook are still available. However, for those hospices that are required to use the CAHPS survey you will have to contact your CAHPS vendor and ask them to incorporate the Veteran-specific questions found in FEHC-V.
- CMS is allowing up to 15 questions to be added to the CAHPS hospice survey, but depending on your vendor, there may be a cost involved with adding those additional questions. NHPCO does not have any connection to your vendors, so the process and cost of adding those questions is up to your hospice and the CAHPS vendor you choose.
- FEHC-V/CAHPS Resources
  - [FEHC-V Questions](#)
  - [FEHC-V Data Analysis Workbook](#)
  - [NHPCO Quality Website](#)

#### Questions and Answers for Matthew Haskins

- **Q:** Will CMS notify those hospices that are required to use the CAHPS survey?
- **A:** CMS is not going to notify you; a hospice has to submit a request to be exempt from CAHPS. There are specific details related to the exemption criteria and I would recommend that everyone visit [NHPCO's CAHPS webpage](#) to get those details.
  - In general, all hospices are required to implement the survey as long as they have a certain number of deaths for 2014. Only those hospice facilities with fewer than 50 deaths during the 2014 calendar year can apply for exemption from the data collection and reporting requirements.
- **Q:** Is FEHC no longer required if we use CAHPS?
- **A:** FEHC was never required, but was always suggested. That being said, if you do begin implementing the CAHPS survey, then we expect you to discontinue use of the FEHC. NHPCO recommends that you only send one survey to the family as sending two separate surveys may frustrate/confuse the family of the patient, and you are less likely to get your survey returned and completed.

- **Q:** We are at Level Three attempting to go to Level Four and my understanding was that FEHC-V implementation was a requirement of Level Four. How are we to meet that requirement if we are one of those hospices required to implement CAHPS?
- **A:** You can now meet your Level Four FEHC-V requirement in two different ways. The ideal option is to get your CAHPS vendor to include the six FEHC-V questions into the new CAHPS survey. If your hospice is not required to implement CAHPS, then you can continue to use the FEHC-V survey questions and data analysis workbook.
  - We do not recommend sending the FEHC-V survey separately from the CAHPS survey because then your families will be receiving two surveys and this will negatively affect your survey returns. Methodologically speaking it is better if all the questions can be incorporated into one survey.
- For additional questions about CAHPS, visit their website: [www.hospicecahpsurvey.org](http://www.hospicecahpsurvey.org).

## **Congressional Outreach**

### **Tony Kudner**

- Tony works for the Hospice Action Network (HAN), NHPCO's lobbying affiliate and national hospice advocacy organization. HAN is the hospice community's voice on Capitol Hill.
- The We Honor Veterans program consistently shines through as one of the highlights that we (HAN) do on Capitol Hill; we've done several briefings for Congress on the WHV program. Today I will give some examples of WHV programs that have engaged their Member of Congress to the benefit of the Veterans they are serving and to the benefit of the Congressman and the hospice itself.
- In terms of things that tie WHV and Congress together, there are currently 108 Members of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress that have served in the military. You may recognize one of them, John Dingell from Michigan, who recently received a standing ovation during the last session in the House of Representatives. John Dingell was the last WWII Veteran serving in Congress; at one time there was well over 100 Members of Congress who were WWII Veterans but John Dingell was the last.
- Congress is keenly interested in Veteran issues going on in their states/districts and because of this all of the Members of Congress that we have talked to have reacted overwhelmingly positive to the WHV program. There have been a couple of stories about Members who were previously ambivalent to hospice who became hospice advocates due to exposure to the WHV program. Most notable is Congressman Tom Reed who was invited by a hospice in his district to honor a Veteran in a hospital setting. It was a very low key affair with the Congressman entering through the back door so as not to draw attention and detract from the purpose of his visit-honoring this Veteran. This low key honoring ceremony had quite the impact on the Congressman and he was sold on hospice care. In the last three years he has been instrumental in passing several pieces of legislation that have made the hospice community stronger.
- There are a wide range of opportunities to engage your Members of Congress and we are happy to facilitate that relationship in any way possible. We want you to develop these relationships and for Members of Congress to see what you are doing for Veterans in their district. There are several natural fits notably around Veterans Day and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. We encourage you to invite your Congressmen to any events that you might hold around these Veteran-specific holidays. Almost all Members of Congress know that politics stop when Veterans are involved and you will be pleasantly surprised that they will not want to politicize your Veterans events but simply be there to perform their Congressional duty of honoring Veterans in their district/state.
- HAN offers toolkits and pre-recorded webinars about how to involve them in your pinning/honor ceremonies that are tied to Veteran-specific holidays. Many WHV programs have

requested, on behalf of the Veteran being honored, U.S. flags that have been flown over the Capitol that only Members of Congress can procure and present to constituents.

- One of the benefits for engaging your Member of Congress is that it will help to raise the profile of your hospice's work for Veterans. Every Member of Congress has a press secretary who is happy to involve the press to make sure that the community knows about the work that you are doing for the Veterans you are serving.
- There is also the benefit of the Congressman just knowing more about hospice. WHV can open up a dialogue about hospice that otherwise wouldn't have occurred. Congress absolutely has a role in the day to day operations of hospice which was made evident when changes in Part-D came about. The Members of Congress that were willing to go to bat for us on Part-D were those that we had developed relationships with previously through programs such as WHV.
- One of the ways you can get involved is by sending staff or even Veteran Volunteers to the [HAN Advocacy Intensive](#). If you can get here and pay for the hotel, the Advocacy Intensive is a free conference that will teach you how to speak to your Congressmen and then HAN will schedule a Congressional Meeting with your Member of Congress to discuss hospice issues and some of the great work that you do for Veterans and all of your patients.
- Resources for engaging your Member of Congress:
  - [Engaging Members of Congress on Veteran's Day](#)- webinar
  - [HAN Newsletter](#)
  - [Veterans Tools](#)

#### Questions and Answers for Tony Kudner

- **Q:** Can you share more information about how to request flags that have been flown over the Capitol?  
**A:** The easiest way you can do that is to order the flags through the Congressmen's website; make sure to go to their website that ends in .gov. Generally websites will have a specific link where you can request a flag and a Hill staffer will get back to you. If you are running into roadblocks please contact HAN, through [veterans@nhpco.org](mailto:veterans@nhpco.org).

#### Honor Flight, Honoring Yesterday's Heroes

##### Larry Blackmore

- Larry Blackmore is a Board Member with the Honor Flight Dayton Hub and also serves as an Honor Flight Guardian and is a Veteran Volunteer at Hospice of Miami County.
- The mission of Honor Flight Dayton is to take Veterans of WWII, Korean, the Vietnam War and terminally-ill Veterans of any armed conflict to see their national memorials in Washington, DC. These trips are provided at no cost to all qualified Veterans. From Dayton we fly into DC for a one-day visit and then we fly back to Dayton that night. Typical trips for us include: WWII Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, the Marine Corps War Memorial, Air Force Memorial and those are followed by visits to the Lincoln Memorial, Korean War Memorial and the Vietnam Wall. In working with hospice units, last year we were able to get some hospice patients on Honor Flights before they passed and/or became too ill to travel.
- Unfortunately we do not get to take all hospice patients on flights before it is too late, so Honor flight Dayton has developed a new program called '[Honoring Yesterday's Heroes](#).' The goal of this program is to proudly honor deceased Veterans who never saw their memorials and living Veterans who may never be able to see their memorials. This is accomplished on Dayton Honor Flights in DC where we will conduct an Honoring Yesterday's Heroes ceremony in which we will photograph an American flag along with the deceased (or unable to travel) Veteran's picture at the appropriate memorial(s).

- For those who would like to participate in this program, Honor Flight Dayton requests a 5 x 7 photo of the Veteran, preferably taken while he or she was in uniform.
- After the trip the family will receive an 8 x 10 color photo and a certificate from Honor Flight Dayton honoring their Veteran. The original photo will also be returned at this time.
- Although this is a program of the Dayton Honor Flight **ALL hospices** in any state are invited to participate and there is no charge for participating in this program.
- One success story that I'd like to share with you is of a Veteran receiving hospice care whose family and hospice sent in a request form for the Honoring Yesterday's Heroes program. I took a copy of his picture with me on an Honor Flight and took a picture of it in front of his memorial. The hospice had a pinning ceremony scheduled for him soon after, so I put a rush on finishing up his packet. The photo and certificate arrived in time and they had a wonderful pinning ceremony for him. Fast forward a few months and I noticed his name on my roll call for our next trip to DC! He had stabilized/improved while on hospice and actually became healthy enough for us to take him to DC to see his memorial in person. It was one of the coolest things that I've encountered since beginning my participation with Honor Flight Dayton.
- I'm really looking to get the word out about this program to hospices, so please participate and spread the word to other hospices.
- Honoring Yesterday's Heroes Resources:
  - [Website](#)
  - [Letter](#)
  - [Request Form](#)

#### Questions & Answers for Larry Blackmore

- **Q:** Does this program cost money?  
**A:** The program is completely free, however we do accept donations. The donations are directly funded back into the program for the flights.
- **Q:** What is the turnaround for getting the pictures back?  
**A:** The turnaround is about a week to ten days; if there is a rush, please let me know and I can plan accordingly to get the pictures back to the family ASAP.
- **Q:** When is the next flight going out?  
**A:** The next flight is scheduled in April but you can send the request form/pictures at any time including up until the day of the flight.
- **Q:** Does the Veteran need to be in hospice care?  
**A:** The Veteran does not have to be in hospice care to be a part of this program, it is open to anyone.

#### Updates from VA

##### Christine Cody

- Provider agreements update: VA is having some challenges getting provider agreements through the regulatory process as some legal questions, which are not likely to be resolved quickly, have arisen. Those facilities that have current provider agreements in place will be able to use them until they expire.
- There is a new internal payment process in place in result of the AM-98 changes; this is for use if the facility does not have a current provider agreement or contract in place. This new process will continue to follow the Medicare hospice pricing for per diem rates. The fiscal year 15 rates are posted on the VA purchase care SharePoint.
- Any invoices should be paid without issue; Veterans should never be denied access for payment as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. If you do encounter any issues/challenges in the field

related to referrals or payments, please contact [veterans@nhpco.org](mailto:veterans@nhpco.org) and they will forward the e-mail to me.

- I also just wanted to take a minute, especially during this holiday season, to thank you all for the care you are providing to our nation's Veterans. This collaboration continues to surprise and inspire me every day. The holidays can be an especially difficult time for the families of deceased Veterans, so I want to thank you and point out the importance of your bereavement services during this time of year.

### **Partner Networking/Success Stories**

- **Heritage Nursing and Rehab:** I am involved with an Honor Flight hub based out of Milwaukee called [Stars and Stripes Honor Flight](#). We do something similar to what Larry was speaking of in that we take pictures and/or service flags of deceased or ill Veterans with us to DC and perform an honor ceremony for those individuals at their memorial(s). I would recommend that everyone go to the [national Honor Flight website](#) where they can find their closest hub and begin participating in this wonderful program.
- **Envoy Hospice:** Since implementing the WHV program in July we now have eight Veteran Volunteers who visit with our Veterans. We had a donation of flags so that each of our Veterans receives a flag and the WHV acknowledgement card. Although many of our patients have dementia, they tend to light up and become aware when that Veteran Volunteer salutes them and gives them a flag, acknowledgement card and lapel pin.
- **Masonic Care:** We definitely integrate the WHV program into our hospice services but we have actually begun to integrate WHV into our homecare program as well. Every single patient is screened for Veteran service and we are finding a large portion of our homecare patients that are Veterans; this identification allows us to do early interventions for them.
- **Midland Care:** We too support our local Honor Flight Hub; one of our palliative care nurses goes on the flights and our Vice President of Compliance works as a team leader. She coordinates the donation of wheelchairs from our DME providers so that Honor Flight can use those donated wheelchairs free of charge during the day of the trip. Internally, we have a continuum of service; we have taken the WHV hospice program and have institutionalized it throughout all of our services including: palliative care, home health, a program called Thrive at Home, and PACE. We do recognition ceremonies on Veterans Day for our patients and the community but we also include Veterans on our staff which helps them to connect more with our patients.

### **Closing Comments**

- Please send WHV your best practices and innovations so that we can share them on our website. Email us at [Veterans@nhpco.org](mailto:Veterans@nhpco.org).
- The next partner networking call will be in March of 2015.
- Thank you for participating!