

IL-HPCO MEMBER VISIT NORTHERN ILLINOIS HOSPICE



Pictured: Pam Cramer, Lisa Novak, Bobbi Leu, Laurie Sievert, Jolene Smith, and Mary Sheehan

Mary Sheehan, IL-HPCO Director and Membership Workgroup Chair, and Pam Cramer, IL-HPCO Executive Director, paid a visit to long-time IL-HPCO member Northern Illinois Hospice (NIH) in Rockford. We met with Lisa Novak, CEO and her leadership team. We learned that NIH was one of the first fifty hospices in the country, created by the community and for the community. It serves five counties in Illinois: Winnebago, Boone, Stephenson, Ogle and western McHenry. Currently its challenges are competition, and recruitment: Social Workers and on-call Physicians. During this meeting we met with NIH leaders who will now serve on IL-HPCO committees and workgroups.

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New Member Benefits

IL-HPCO has partnered with Acevedo in sponsoring the upcoming Acevedo MIPS for Palliative Care Virtual Workshops. This workshop will be discounted to all IL-HPCO members. See information on Page 6 in this Newsletter.

IL-HPCO is working with the Essential Education Webinar Network offering Webinars specifically for Hospice and Home Care professionals. You have been getting many notices of weekly Webinars which are offered to IL-HPCO members at a reduced rate.

Attend

**REGISTER NOW:
Annual Educational Conference
October 12 in Naperville at
Northern Illinois University**

IL-HPCO Annual Education Conference Northern Illinois University in Naperville.

Two hours of "Regulatory Update" with Jennifer Kennedy from NHPCO. Keynote Speech from May Kay, RN, MA, published author "Graphic Medicine: Comics, Caregiving, and End of Life." Registration opens end of July. For details visit the website, www.il-hpco.org.

Legislative Update – Betsy D. Mitchell, IL -HPCO Legislative Consultant



Illinois has a Budget!

By now most have heard that in more than two years, the Illinois General Assembly finally passed a budget and is no longer spending money at levels higher than the revenue generated. Most importantly to IL-HPCO, the Illinois Department of Human Service's Funeral and Burial Fund was fully funded.

<http://www.dailyherald.com/news/20170724/for-first-time-in-years-state-will-help-pay-for-burials-for-the-poor>

This fund has been around for several years. During the impasse, no funding for this vital service was available which put much undo hardship on many hospice providers. Many providers have been asking about this fund. Please know the process for obtaining these funds did not change, but the fund does once again have monies available. Below please find a copy of what is posted on DHS's website. It explains the process very well.

What is the purpose of this service?

The program pays for the funeral and burial expenses when a person's resources and all other sources of payment are less than the DHS standard payment rates.

Who can receive these services?

The Department pays the funeral and burial expenses of a person who at the time of death:

- was receiving any of the following kinds of assistance:
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash
- Aid to the Aged, Blind, or Disabled (AABD) Cash
- All Kids Assist
- Parent/All Kids Assist
- All Kids Moms & Babies
- Family Assist
- AABD Medical
- General Assistance Foster Care/Adoption Care
- or who would have qualified for:
- All Kids Assist
- Parent/All Kids Assist
- All Kids Moms & Babies
- Family Assist
- AABD Medical

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What services are offered?

The Department pays funeral and burial expenses on two types of claims:

1. IL444-0029 - Funeral or Burial Claim (pdf) (submitted by a funeral home or cemetery) persons not legally responsible for the deceased may contribute to the cost of the casket, urn, or vault; and the cost of additional expenses or merchandise that are not required to be provided with the Department's payment, with limits of \$2,000 funeral and \$2000 burial OR
2. IL444-0094 - Funeral & Burial Reimbursement Claim (pdf) submitted by a person who is not legally responsible for the deceased and who has paid an amount equal to or more than the amount of the claim.

Maximum Amount that DHS will Pay

- \$1,103 for a funeral
- \$552 for a cremation/burial

How to Apply?

Applications may be found at your local Family Community Resource Center, or you may click on the claim form links above. Use the DHS Office Locator to find your local Family Community Resource Center.

Where to Mail the Form:

The offices below have their funeral, burial, and reimbursement claims managed by the Springfield-based DHS Funeral and Burial Unit. **ONLY** if the deceased was/would have been served by the Family Community Resource Centers (FCRCs) in Cook County or in the FCRCs in the counties listed below, would you send the reimbursement claims directly to:

Illinois Department of Human Services
Funeral and Burial Unit
100 South Grand Avenue, East, Lower Level
Springfield, IL 62762

Legislators hope that the new budget will stabilize Illinois' difficult fiscal situation. Before the passage of a full budget, the state was spending approximately \$39 billion while only collecting \$32 billion. The budget implemented reduces expenditures to \$36 billion. The budget package also increases the state income tax from 3.75% to 4.95% on individuals and increases the income tax on corporations from 5.25% to 7%. It is estimated that this will generate approximately \$4.3 billion annually. As you are well aware, Illinois also has almost \$15 billion in unpaid bills. With this budget, Illinois will still have unpaid bills, but included is authorization for bonds to be issued to pay down a portion of the outstanding bills.

Clearly, this is not the end to the financial crisis. The approved package simply provides the framework for the state to operate within a budget plan. Many believe that the package also may need additional attention for K-12 education funding due to a provision in the budget bill authorizing K-12 education funding through an "evidence based funding formula" which is not law yet. In May, the General Assembly passed SB1 which created an evidence based funding formula for education, but the

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SB1 which created an evidence based funding formula for education, but the Governor has stated he will use his amendatory power to change the bill.

Budget Package Summary

The package included three separate bills: SB 6 (containing the appropriation authority), SB 9 (Income tax increases and other tax related items), and SB 42 (containing the substantive legal changes to make it all work).

Senate Bill 6 – Appropriations

Appropriates money to each state agency so state government may provide services (i.e. child care, domestic violence care, aging programs, public health, environmental protection, etc.). As stated above, the Funeral and Burial Fund within the Illinois Department of Human Services was fully funded. For complete details of the funding side, please contact me for further details.

Senate Bill 9 – Revenue Source

The primary items include:

- Permanent personal income tax increase from 3.75% to 4.95%, effective July 1, 2017
- Permanent corporate income tax increase from 5.25% to 7%, effective July 1, 2017

SB 42 – B.I.M.P. (Budget Implementation Act)

- Contains the legal language to implement the budget.

SB 1 – Education Plan

So why is it important for IL-HPCO to know about the proposed education plan passed in Senate Bill 1? It is simple. According language contained in the budget bill (which many did not see until after the bill was passed), without SB 1 or an alternative evidence-based formula in place, the appropriations that are contained in the Fiscal Year 2018 state spending plan will not be able to be processed and sent to elementary and secondary education school systems. Some schools have indicated that they can open and operate from their reserves, while others have indicated that without the state funding, they will not be able to begin classes in August.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

New Medicare Card (formerly SSNRI)

CMS is removing Social Security Numbers from Medicare cards to help fight identity theft and safeguard taxpayer dollars. In previous messages CMS referred to this work as the Social Security Number Removal Initiative (SSNRI). Moving forward, they will refer to this project as the New Medicare Card. To help you find information quickly, CMS designed a new homepage linking you to the latest details (PDF).

HOSPICE COMPARE IS HERE

How does Illinois rank?

On August 16 CMS Hospice Compare website went “live,” *Hospice Compare* website providing valuable information regarding the quality delivered by Medicare-certified hospice agencies throughout the nation. The Hospice Item Set (HIS) and Quality Measures (QM) for each agency will be shared with the public, with the goal of helping patients, family members and health care providers make more informed decisions about where to get care. Hospice Compare is a result of a provision in the Affordable Care Act that required established procedures for making hospice quality data available to the public.

Read the NHPCO Quality Alert (08/16/17). NHPCO is available to send corrections on your hospice information (not your measure scores) if you have found errors, and corrections still have not been made by CMS, NHPCO wants to hear from you. Please contact regulatory@nhpco.org. Hospice Care ranks Illinois at 23 nationally with a mean score of 93.17. Vermont is first, Rhode Island second, Wisconsin third, Iowa fourth and Tennessee fifth. Ranked last are Connecticut, Wyoming, Maryland, Delaware and District of Columbia...mean score of 82.75.

Illinois Advocates on “The Hill” in July

Seven IL-HPCO members attended NHPCO’s Hospice Advocacy Network (HAN) Advocacy Intensive. More than 300 Advocates from across the country delivered the messages on hospice and palliative care to Congress...more than half of Congress listened to us! We were aptly trained by HAN professionals so our message was consistent and powerful explaining and advocating for the Patient Choice and Quality Care Act, the Rural Access to Hospice Act, and the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act. We also were prepared to comment on the Hospice and Medicare Advantage “Carve-In” if asked.

Illinois Advocates visited the offices of :Senators Richard Durbin; and Tammy Duckworth; Representatives Luis Guterrez; Peter Roskam; Brad Schneider; Bobby Rush; Daniel Lipinski; Danny Davis; Raja Krisnamoorthi; Adam Kinzinger; Mike Quigley;

Janice Schakowsky and Bill Foster. It was a thrilling and gratifying experience to attend this and represent a bi-partisan WIN WIN message. All offices were cordial and interested. We will continue to build these relationships and look forward to visiting with these Congressional officials in their districts when Congress has recessed.



Pam Cramer, Monica Batista-Seasons, Angela Wrubleski-Seasons, Minnette Willard Scott-Transitions, Kasie Fagan-Seasons, and Nicole McCann-Davis-Seasons.



MIPS for Palliative Care Workshop

A virtual workshop developed and presented by Acevedo Consulting, presented over the course of four weeks. This course will help you prepare your organization for successful MIPS reporting in 2017 and beyond. Is your palliative care program prepared for a 4% penalty in 2019? Have you given thought to how you'll report in 2018? If you've answered No, to either one of these questions, this workshop is for you!

**Dates are : Wednesday, September 13th, 20th, 27th – 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. (EDT) and
Wednesday, October 4th – 1:00: - 2:00 p.m. (EDT)**

CMS FINAL RULE

In case you missed it

CMS has finalized rules that will provide hospices with a one percent rise in 2018 Medicare payments, an estimated increase of \$180 million. This follows a 2.1% increase (\$350 million) in 2017. CMS also launched the Hospice Compare website, and will automate the process for beneficiaries to elect hospice treatment.

The Hospice Compare site will feature metrics to gauge how well the patients feel their hospice assessed their needs, along with a five star rating system.

Find the CMS fact sheet at:

<http://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2017-Fact-Sheet-items/2017-08-01.html>.
(Modern Healthcare, 8/1, www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20170801/NEWS/170809990)



IL-HPCO will start marketing Illinois HOSPICE LICENSE PLATES this Fall.

Watch the website.

This handsome plate is available when it's time to renew your license for a nominal fee.

Illinois is fortunate in that it has Hospice License Plates....many states have attempted to get a hospice plate and have not been able to do so.

By purchasing this specialty plate, not vanity plate, you donate to IL-HPCO.

You can get more information at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/vehicles/license_plate_guide/hospice.html

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