



IL-HPCO Statement on the CMS National Moratorium on New Hospice and Home Health Provider Enrollment

On May 13, 2026, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a six-month national moratorium on the enrollment of new hospice providers into the Medicare program. CMS made this decision in response to program integrity concerns concentrated in California, Nevada, Texas, and Arizona.

The moratorium affects enrollment into the Medicare program of **new** hospice providers. It impacts providers already certified by Medicare only if they are making certain ownership changes or adding new branch or practice locations. The moratorium does not affect any individual's ability to receive care from an existing provider, and Illinois hospices already enrolled as Medicare providers continue to deliver care to the patients and families who need it.

The Illinois Hospice & Palliative Care Organization (IL-HPCO) and its member providers strongly support efforts to root out fraud, waste, and abuse in Medicare. Bad actors who exploit the Medicare hospice program harm patients, undermine public trust, and threaten the providers who deliver care the right way — and we don't want them in the Medicare program. However, we are concerned that a blanket national moratorium has two important downsides for Illinois. One, it may undermine confidence on the part of patients, family members and healthcare provider partners in the strong value proposition Illinois hospice providers offer to terminally ill patients. Two, it treats well-regulated states like Illinois the same as states facing genuine fraud crises and, if extended beyond six months, risks coverage gaps in communities with a small number of existing hospices.

To be direct, while fraud may exist in Illinois and every state across the country, the overwhelming majority of hospice providers deliver compliant, patient-centered, clinically appropriate care to individuals with complex needs, in their most vulnerable moments. Illinois' hospice providers are well-regulated by the Illinois Department of Public Health. The department conducts recertification and complaint surveys in accordance with CMS's required timeframes and survey violations are trending lower not higher. Furthermore, the data show that between January 2024 and June 2025, Illinois licensed hospice agencies

grew modestly from 165 to 174 (+5.5%), reflecting genuine patient need based on the increase in the population of older adults more likely to experience a serious illness rather than the massive expansion of providers seen in states such as CA, TX, NV and AZ.

For Patients & Families:

This announcement does not change anything about the care that patients and their loved ones are currently receiving. Illinois hospices that are already certified by Medicare are not affected by the moratorium and continue to care for current patients and accept new ones. Any individual or family considering hospice can enroll and receive the hospice benefit with one of the many established Illinois providers serving their community.

When choosing a provider, IL-HPCO recommends using the Medicare's Care Compare for Hospice tool, which provides quality ratings and contact information for legitimate, Medicare-certified hospices.

For Healthcare Provider Partners:

Hospitals, long-term-care facilities and healthcare practitioners who care for patients that may be eligible and appropriate for hospice can continue to rely on Illinois hospices already certified by Medicare. The moratorium does not change a hospice's ability to accept new patients or continue delivering high-quality care. Intake, coordination, and care delivery processes are unchanged, and referrals to established Illinois providers will continue to be processed as normal.

How to Take Precautions

We also encourage providers, caregivers and patients alike to guard against Medicare fraud by taking the following steps:

- Safeguard Medicare ID and Social Security numbers.
- Review Medicare Summary Notices to confirm the care listed matches the care received.
- Ask your provider if you have any questions about the care you are receiving.
- If you believe a hospice election was made in your name without your knowledge, call 1-800-MEDICARE for assistance in reversing it.

In closing, IL-HPCO and its members fully share CMS's goal of removing bad actors from the Medicare program and support strong, targeted oversight to achieve this goal. The essential message for Illinois families is one of reassurance: access to hospice care across the state remains uninterrupted, and established Medicare-certified providers continue to admit and care for patients exactly as they have before. IL-HPCO will continue working

alongside the Illinois Department of Public Health, the National Alliance for Care at Home, and federal policymakers to ensure that program integrity and patient access advance together — so that every Illinoisan who needs hospice care receives it from a provider committed to providing quality care.