



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Awards \$5.5 Million to Develop Measures for Community-Based Palliative Care**

**Chicago (September 21, 2018)** - The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) in partnership with the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care (Coalition) and the RAND Corporation, was awarded a [\\$5.5 million three-year grant](#) from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to develop patient-reported quality measures for community-based palliative care. The measures are intended for use in CMS's Quality Payment Program (QPP), including the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and Alternative Payment Models (APMs).

"This is a unique opportunity where CMS made MACRA resources available to medical and health associations to develop measures that matter to our field," said AAHPM President Tammie E. Quest, MD FAAHPM. "CMS pinpointed palliative care as having significant measure gaps, therefore inhibiting teams from reporting on the quality of care that is provided."

In addition to measure gaps in general, there are significant gaps in meaningful symptom management and communication measures, despite the noted importance of these domains to patients with serious illness. "It is important that patients feel heard and understood," suggested Amy Melnick, MPA, Executive Director, National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care. "New measures developed through this generous grant will incorporate patient, caregiver and family input along with clinical and other stakeholder feedback. The Coalition is pleased to partner with AAHPM and RAND on ensuring this cross section of stakeholders are part of the entire measure development process."

With support from CMS, the partners will assemble a technical expert clinical user patient panel (TECUPP) to provide input through the measure development, testing and implementation process, including creating technical specifications, conducting validity and reliability testing, publishing a paper on the measure development, testing process and results, and presenting the measures during a consensus-building endorsement (CBE) process. Swain Eng and Associates LLC, a healthcare consulting firm, will be supporting the project.

AAHPM is committed to improving the quality of healthcare delivery to seriously ill people in all settings, including the use of meaningful measures for hospice and palliative care quality reporting. This measure development project complements other AAHPM-convened quality

and payment initiatives, including the unification of specialty palliative care quality registries under a new quality collaborative, testing of a methodology to identify the population with serious illness for inclusion in quality measures, and a proposal for an alternative payment model to support community-based palliative care.

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**The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM)** is the professional organization for physicians specializing in hospice and palliative medicine (HPM), and the membership also includes nurses, social workers, and other health and spiritual care providers committed to improving quality of life for seriously ill patients and their families. For more than 30 years, AAHPM has been dedicated to expanding access to high quality palliative care, and advancing the discipline of HPM, through professional education and training, development of a specialist workforce, support for clinical practice standards, research and public policy. AAHPM is governed by a 17-member Board of Directors and managed by 16 full-time staff along with additional, scalable support provided by Association Management Center (AMC) based in Chicago, IL.

**The National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care (Coalition)** is an independent 501c3 organization comprised of the ten-leading national hospice and palliative care organizations dedicated to advancing care of patients and families living with serious and life-limiting illness by communicating, coordinating, and collaborating on issues and activities of importance to the interdisciplinary field. The Coalition is the home of the [National Consensus Project](#), Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care, an initiative which brings sixteen national organizations together to establish and implement high quality palliative care guidelines in all settings.

**The RAND Corporation**, a nonprofit research organization, has a long history of quality measurement, including over three decades of developing, testing, and implementing quality measures (QMs) across a wide range of clinical care domains. RAND has collaborated on or developed 31 National Quality Forum-endorsed measures covering hospice and palliative care, geriatrics, cancer, medication management and medication safety, substance abuse, pediatric conditions, adverse events in hospital settings, and cultural competency. RAND's deep knowledge of quality measurement methods includes experience with CMS's Measures Management System Blueprint and developing tools to capture the patient's experience of care and patient-reported outcomes (e.g., Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and System [CAHPS] survey tools).

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, aiming to strengthen healthcare services and information available to beneficiaries and health care providers who serve them. Visit [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov) and follow @CMSSGov.

To learn more, please contact AAHPM Director of Quality and Research Katherine Ast ([kast@aahpm.org](mailto:kast@aahpm.org)).