

For Immediate Release:
June 10, 2008

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Faith and Grace Hospice Meeting Medicare-Driven Industry Changes with Quality Partners Initiative

(Montgomery, AL) – This summer, hospice regulation and accountability will change when Medicare releases its 2008 Conditions of Participation (CoPs) for hospice care. To aid hospices in the transition, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) has launched a Quality Partners initiative to help hospices examine their organizations from “boardroom to bedside”. Faith and Grace Hospice, Inc. is proud to be one of the hospices participating in this important NHPCO initiative.

While the former Conditions were geared towards regulating actions taken in hospice care, the aim of the new CoPs is to regulate outcomes. This means greater freedom for hospice providers to tailor care to the needs of patients and families, as well as greater oversight and feedback from Medicare and other regulatory bodies.

“The changes mean that hospices will have greater flexibility in determining how to best address their own specific challenges,” said Faith and Grace Hospice, Inc. Director Maggie Thompson. “We are excited to have this opportunity to examine and refine our services in a way that best serves the needs of our community.”

The new CoPs are centered on three main components: Comprehensive Assessment, Interdisciplinary Group Planning, and Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement. The Comprehensive Assessment calls for a group assessment of the patient’s situation within the first four days and then a follow-up reassessment every fourteen days to review the patient’s plan of care and make changes or additions. Linked to this is the Interdisciplinary Group Planning CoP, a condition that mandates data-driven interventions in the patient’s plan of care.

According to a recent issue of Newline Magazine, a publication of the NHPCO, “Hospices must achieve coordination of all disciplines and services involved in the plan of care, but they have flexibility in determining the specific systems of communication and integration.”

The third component, the Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement CoP, asks the hospice to examine its own organizational structure in the same way that the hospice is asked to examine the patient. Hospices will gather data on all aspects of their organization, “from bedside to boardroom,” to better adapt to the needs of their patients and communities. The Quality Partners initiative lists more than 1000 categories on which hospices can measure their success.

“Quality Partners provides opportunities for the development of new self-assessment and data collection tools, performance measures, national support and education for hospice assessment and data collection efforts, and a forum for sharing ideas and best practices,” said Andy Duncan of the NHPCO. “Recognizing that strength is found through partnerships, NHPCO is committed to working with state hospice organizations and individual hospice programs to promote excellence throughout the hospice community.”

Faith and Grace Hospice welcomes this opportunity to tailor care to the needs of patients and families in Montgomery and the outlying communities. For more information on the changes the hospice industry faces, please visit our website at www.fghospice.com.

Suggested Interviews:

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Faith and Grace Hospice, INC is a not-for-profit organization providing care to the terminally ill with a commitment to the dignity and values of patients and their families. More on the web at www.fghospice.com.

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