

Ensuring Every Family Receives Quality Support: Recommendations to Improve Care for Families Facing Serious Illness



CAPC recommends that payers and policymakers take the following actions to improve care for all people living with serious illness and their families. Our research indicates that some of the issues highlighted in the “What Goes Wrong” column may [disproportionately impact certain subpopulations](#); regardless, the actions below can ensure that all people living with serious illness and their families can experience optimal care quality.

What Goes Wrong	Domain	Recommendation	Congress	Payers	CMS/ CMMI/ Other Fed	States
Poor quality pain and symptom management	Standards/ Quality	Standardize the use of specific screening/assessments , particularly in Medicare Advantage, with care plan to address distress		X	X	X
	Standards/ Quality	Include access to specialty palliative care in the Age-Friendly Hospital measure in the Inpatient Quality Reporting Program			X	
	Payment	Maintain payment for palliative care services delivered via telehealth , and continue to allow virtual opioid prescribing for patients living with serious illness	X		X	
	Workforce	Expand use of Community Health Workers for patients with serious illnesses, particularly cancer and heart failure		X	X	X
	Workforce	Pass the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act to expand the specialty palliative care workforce	X			

What Goes Wrong	Domain	Recommendation	Congress	Payers	CMS/ CMMI/ Other Fed	States
	Other	Enable well-defined exceptions to opioid restrictions, utilization controls, pill limits, etc. for people with serious illness controls, pill limits, etc. for people with serious illness		X		X
Caregiver burden and financial toxicity	Standards/ Quality	Standardize the use of specific screening/assessments -- including caregiver burden and distress		X	X	X
	Payment	Highlight payment opportunities for linkage to caregiver psychosocial supports under existing billing codes		X	X	
	Other	Ensure access to caregiver education, training, and counseling in accordance with the RAISE Act				X
	Other	Create minimum standards for charity care for tax-exempt hospitals, with stringent enforcement				X
Poor quality clinician communication	Workforce	Expand training in serious illness communication skills for all relevant specialists and disciplines		X		X
	Standards/ Quality	Utilize the " Heard and Understood " measure in quality incentive and accountability programs		X	X	
	Awareness	Incorporate cultural storytelling traditions and motivational interviewing into patient and family education materials, navigation services, and case management programs. (Note that this can also improve awareness of palliative care.)		X		X

What Goes Wrong	Domain	Recommendation	Congress	Payers	CMS/ CMMI/ Other Fed	States
Lower hospice utilization	Payment	Allow patients to receive concurrent hospice services while receiving treatment for their serious illness, and incorporate this benefit enhancement into all alternative payment models, especially for advanced kidney disease and heart failure	X	X	X	