**FY 2024 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update Final Rule for FY2024**

Recently, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released the [final rule](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-08-02/pdf/2023-16116.pdf) for the hospice payment system. The final rule provides payment rate updates, finalizes rate setting charges and implements changes to the quality reporting program. For further reading, a [fact sheet](https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/fiscal-year-2024-hospice-payment-rate-update-final-rule-cms-1787-f) accompanies the final rule.

The American Society of Hematology (ASH) submitted comments on a request for information within the rule, whereby the agency asked for information on the use of higher-level hospice care that includes complex palliative treatments like chemotherapy/radiation, blood transfusions, or dialysis. The comments submitted support ASH’s efforts to increase awareness of the use of [palliative blood transfusions](https://www.hematology.org/advocacy/policy-news-statements-testimony-and-correspondence/policy-statements/2019/palliative-blood-transfusions-in-hospice) in the hospice setting.

ASH’s comments recommended “that CMS work with hospice providers to ensure the treating physicians and beneficiaries understand that transfusions are included in the higher-level hospice benefit and that physicians are conveying the availability for this treatment option to hospice patients.” The Society also recommended that CMS develop education materials for referring physicians that provide information on the higher-level of care hospice benefit, under which blood transfusions fall.

In response to the thirty-nine comments submitted on this this topic, the agency thanked stakeholders for the valuable input, and indicated that they intend to use the comments to inform future changes to the hospice program that may include addressing barriers to care and promoting transparency.