American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

For Immediate Release

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Hospice and Palliative Medicine Receives CMS Recognition

Glenview, IL, October 17, 2008 – The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) recently received notification from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) that the agency now recognizes Hospice and Palliative Medicine as a medical subspecialty. This new recognition will simplify and improve Medicare reimbursement to hospice and palliative medicine professionals for care and services provided to their patients and families.

"This represents a significant milestone for the field," remarked Porter Storey, MD, AAHPM executive vice president. "Studies show hospice and palliative medicine reduces Medicare costs while improving the quality of care patients receive. Nearly 2000 hospitals have formed palliative medicine consultation teams because of the dual benefit of better patient care and shorter hospital stays."

The subspecialty of hospice and palliative medicine was recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in 2006. Accreditation by ABMS and ACGME puts hospice and palliative medicine

post-residency training on par with training programs in other subspecialties and enables hospice and palliative medicine fellowship training programs to access graduate medical education funding through Medicare.

According to the letter from Whitney May, deputy director, Division of Practitioner Services, Hospital and Ambulatory Policy Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the decision to recognize Hospice and Palliative Medicine is due in large part to "the important work physicians carry out in hospice, home health, and inpatient hospital settings."

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AAHPM's membership includes over 3,600 physicians and other medical professionals dedicated to excellence in palliative medicine and the prevention and relief of patient and family suffering. Since 1988, AAHPM has supported hospice and palliative medicine through advancement of clinical practice standards, fostering research, providing education, and through public policy advocacy. For more information, contact AAHPM at 847/375-4712 or visit www.aahpm.org.

For further information on specialty codes, visit www.cms.hhs.gov.