



# **East Texas Hospice & Palliative Care Conference**

**Date: August 7th, 2025**

## **AGENDA**

**8:30am – 9:00am | Registration/Breakfast/Welcome Attendees/Announcements**

**9:00am – 10:00am | QAPI for the Whole TEAM | Lauren Templeton, DO, FAAHPM, HMDC, The Pennant Group and Weatherbee Resources |** Your QAPI program must be an agency-wide, data-driven, quality-assessment, and performance-improvement program. Now, where do we start?

**10:00am – 10:10am | BREAK**

**10:10am – 11:10am | Core Competencies for Hospice Leadership and Interdisciplinary Collaboration | Candice Chappell, RN, BSN, Chief Operations Officer, Solaris Healthcare & Hospice |** The hospice medical director plays a key role in coordinating the care of the patient starting from prior to admission and beyond their death. This presentation will highlight the core competencies a medical director should continually develop to optimize the care patients receive and ensure regulatory compliance. As an equal member of the hospice interdisciplinary group, the medical director can learn from and teach other group members in hopes of continually improving patient care and outcomes while elevating the quality of the entire hospice organization.

**11:10am – 11:20am – BREAK**

**11:20am – 12:20am | Documentation for Eligibility & Audit Readiness | Hunter Mercer, BSN, RN, Hospice in the Pines |** Learners will be able to explain the key elements of the physician's eligibility statement. They will also be able to identify the essential components of strong documentation for both initial and comprehensive assessments across all disciplines. Additionally, learners will gain an understanding of how measurable care goals in the hospice plan of care are linked to QAPI (Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement) measures.

**12:20pm – 1:30pm Lunch**

**1:30pm – 2:30pm | Palliative Care & Symptom Management | Sean Seelbach MBA-HCM, BSN, RN, CHPN, Executive Director, Three Oaks Hospice |** What is palliative care? This session will cover the core principles of palliative care and how it differs from hospice, offering clear guidance on when and how to integrate palliative services into clinical practice. Participants will learn how evidence-based tools are used for symptom assessment, explore strategies for managing complex symptoms such as pain, dyspnea, and nausea, and gain skills for navigating difficult conversations around goals of care and advance planning. The session will also highlight the psychosocial and spiritual dimensions of care, emphasizing support for both patients and their families.

**2:30pm – 2:40pm – BREAK**

**2:40pm - 3:40pm | HOPE Unpacked: A Hospice Leaders' Guide To What's Next | Chris Gallarneau, Senior Education Consultant, MAC Legacy** | This session will unpack the new Hospice Outcomes and Patient Evaluation (HOPE) tool - what it is, how it differs from the retiring Hospice Item Set (HIS), and what your team needs to know to integrate it smoothly before the October 1, 2025, transition date.

**3:40pm – 3:50pm | BREAK**

**3:50pm – 4:50pm | Communicating the Value of Hospice: Strategies to Enhance Quality and Length of Life | Taylor Tarr, RN, Community Education Representative, Heart to Heart Hospice | How to promote the benefits of hospice from a non-marketing team member.** This interdisciplinary education session will explore effective communication strategies for promoting timely access to hospice and palliative care. Emphasis will be placed on how nurses, social workers, and other non-marketing team members can engage in values-based discussions with physicians, patients, families, and other healthcare professionals to reframe hospice as an evidence-based intervention that enhances quality and—often—quantity of life.