



# Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation Alpha Test



*Informational  
Webinar*

*March 5, 2020*

# Agenda

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- Introduction
- Eligibility to Participate
- Selection of Hospices to Participate
- Benefits of Participation
- Alpha Test Requirements and Support
- Question and Answer Session
- Contact

# Introduction

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# What is HOPE, and what is the HOPE alpha test?

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- CMS has contracted with Abt Associates to develop and test a new hospice patient assessment
- The draft assessment is called Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE)
- The Abt team with our partners are conducting field testing of the draft HOPE assessment
- The purpose of testing is to establish reliability and validity of the assessment items to further refine the draft HOPE, for the next phase of testing

HOPE development work is conducted under CMS contract No. 75FCMC18D0014, Task Order No. 75FCMC19F0001

# Timing of the HOPE Alpha Test

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## **Hospice outreach and recruitment**

December 2019 – February 2020



## **Selection and enrollment of participating hospices**

March 2020 – May 2020



## **Hospice staff training**

June 2020 – July 2020



## **Data collection**

August 2020 – January 2021

# Eligibility to Participate

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# Who is eligible to take part in HOPE alpha testing?

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- **All Medicare certified hospices are eligible (participation is voluntary)**
  - If your hospice has not yet expressed interest, please complete the HOPE alpha test Interest Form, located here:  
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/hope-alpha-test-recruitment-announcement-final.pdf-0>
  - Complete interest forms by March 12, 2020.
  - Completing the interest form:
    - *Does not commit your hospice to participation*
    - *Does not guarantee that your hospice will be selected*
  
- What if we participated in previous HOPE testing or information gathering?
  - Hospices **are** eligible if they participated in the HEART Pilot A, or the HOPE pilot test
  - Hospices are **not** eligible if their staff participated in HOPE focus groups or the HOPE Technical Expert Panel (CMS wants to make sure as many different hospices as possible have opportunity to participate)

# Selection of Hospices to Participate

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# Which hospices are selected to participate?

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- Sampling procedures to achieve a diverse mix of about 15 hospices for the alpha test
  - Any geographic location
  - Rural and urban
  - Small, medium and large
  - Profit and nonprofit
  - Use electronic documentation system, or paper-based
  - Different service locations (e.g., home, skilled nursing or assisted living facility, hospice facility, hospital)

# Benefits of Participation

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- Be part of developing the new hospice patient assessment instrument, HOPE
- Provide direct feedback about assessments and workflow
- Testing overall contributes to improved quality of care
- CMS acknowledges participating hospices in presentations and publications about HOPE
- Each participating hospice receives a small monetary token of appreciation

# Alpha Test Requirements and Support

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# What type of hospice support is required?

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- Commitment from Hospice leadership
- Hospice team:
  - Liaison – the point person at the hospice who communicates and coordinates with the Abt team, and helps with scheduling visits and tracking HOPE assessments
  - Clinicians to conduct HOPE assessments with patients
    - *Registered nurses (RN), social workers (SW) and spiritual counselors*
- Completing HOPE assessments electronically
  - Hospice staff may use their own devices with internet access, or Abt will provide laptops and hotspots
  - Abt provides usernames and passwords to access the secure web platform

# What will hospices do during the alpha test?

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- Approximately 4-6 HOPE assessments per week, for approximately 20 weeks
  - Exact number of assessments is based on hospice size
- The Abt team trains clinicians to complete HOPE assessments
  - As few as 2 RNs, or as many as 6 RNs at a larger hospice
  - 1 – 3 social workers and 1 – 3 spiritual counselors, if available on staff
- Two clinicians conduct a joint visit for some assessments
  - 2 clinicians conduct a joint visit to the patient, and each completes the HOPE assessment
  - One clinician completes the assessment with the patient (and/or caregiver as applicable)
  - The second clinician only **observes**, and documents the assessment independently

# What type of support does the Abt team provide?

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- **Alpha Test lead:** Olga Ehrlich RN, PhD
  - Hospice and palliative care expertise
- The Abt team includes experienced hospice clinicians to provide direct support
  - **Site Coordinator teams** dedicated to each hospice field test site
- The Abt team provides all training and materials; routine and regular follow-up with sites
- Dedicated email: [HOPEtesting@abtassoc.com](mailto:HOPEtesting@abtassoc.com)

# What will the hospice team do during alpha testing?

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- Identify eligible patients & assign unique study identification number
- When scheduling the regular hospice visit: Ask to explain the HOPE alpha test
  - HOPE assessments are conducted during regularly scheduled clinical visits
- During regularly scheduled visit, obtain patient and/or caregiver agreement to participate
  - HOPE testing is “exempt” from formal informed consent requirements, but you will still explain the study to the patient and/or caregiver, and obtain their verbal agreement
  - The one-page Alpha Test Information handout is given to patients/caregivers to review and keep

# What will the hospice team do during alpha testing?

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- When patient and/or caregiver agreement is obtained, the clinician completes the HOPE assessment
  - A second clinician will complete some assessments with the same patient, in a joint visit
- Track eligible patients & assessments completed throughout the alpha test
- Provide feedback about assessments

# Role of the Caregiver in Testing

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- HOPE is a patient assessment
  - Some patients may be unable to respond
  - Some patients may ask or expect their caregiver/family member to participate in the assessment
- Regular care: the caregiver participates by responding on behalf of the patient when a patient is unable to answer
- HOPE alpha test: Obtain caregiver agreement to participate

# Question and Answer Session

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You can ask questions in various ways, including:

- **Phone** – Enter your audio pin and use the hand-raising icon to enable us to unmute your line.
- **Computer Mic and Speakers** – Enable your microphone and use the hand-raising icon to enable us to unmute your line.
- **Chat** – Type your question into the “Questions” box.

CMS will answer questions as time permits.

# Contact

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# Contact Information

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Contact the Abt Associates HOPE Testing team at  
[HOPEtesting@abtassoc.com](mailto:HOPEtesting@abtassoc.com)