

## **The Alliance goes to Washington for Congressional meetings in March And holds first Mississippi Legislative day in April**

Louisiana & Mississippi Hospice & Palliative Care Organization  
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### ***Congressional meetings focus attention on NCLOS (non cancer length of stay) and generate a swell of calls to CMS on behalf of Hospice Administrator***

I attended National Hospice Capitol Hill Day on March 27 & 28 with a contingent made up of Nancy Dunn, the Education Director of LMHPCO, and Lorrie Harris a Mississippi resident who works in Hospice Clinical Operations for Seasons Healthcare Management in Rosemont, Ill. The 'ASK' for NHPCO was the same as the previous year, that is to continue to pursue adoption of H.E.L.P. Hospice Act legislation and to seek additional sponsors.

The Alliance's contingency met with the Legislative Assistant of both Mississippi Senators as well as the Legislative Assistant of all four Congressmen. In addition to the HELP presentation and 'ASK' we delivered State maps of each Legislators District (see sample map below) that included statistical information as well as their picture. The map was a big hit with each office, and a keeper. Legislators will not bury or throw their picture away and it is planted strategically on the map.

### ***Detailed Hospice Information now available by State Senate & Representative Districts in Louisiana and Mississippi***

Through a partnership with LMHPCO and Hospice Analytics representative, Cordt Kassner, LMHPCO is now making hospice information available to state legislators at their district levels! Hospice Analytics, has aggregated county-level Medicare information into state Senate and Representative districts as they have done in the past on the State and National level. The maps and detailed hospice information are being used to educate our legislators about hospice as well as advancing district-specific advocacy goals.

State legislators now have access to the specific hospice information in the counties they serve – including the number of hospices, the number of admissions and deaths, length of stay, top diagnoses, and more. LMHPCO is excited to advance its advocacy goals by having access to this level of detailed information, and continuing to serve as the best resource for hospice and palliative care information across our states. In meetings with Legislators and their assistance using this data, legislators were assured that LMHPCO was the 'go to' agency for anything concerning hospice in the State.

An example of the maps impact was apparent when at the Mississippi Legislative Day Jamey Boudreaux stopped by the Chairman of the Medicaid committee's office to say hello, and on a very busy legislative day when the legislature in both Houses was in session all day, the Chairman was sitting at his desk studying the hospice map that had been given to him earlier in an introductory meeting by the State Director.

### ***Mississippi Legislative Day***

On April 10, 2012 the Alliance held its first Legislative Day at the State Capitol with the support of three legislative committee members; Lisa Powers, Tiwana O'Rear, and Natalie Ellis all of Sanctuary House in Tupelo and Jamey Boudreaux, LMHPCO Director, Nancy Dunn, LMHPCO Education Director and myself. We set up an Alliance display, and passed out cards listing LMHPCO member agencies by zip code that are located in each District. For the most part we had to catch legislators as they moved through the halls and walk along while explaining hospice.

Cordt developed the above referenced map with District detail for key legislators including the Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of House, all members of the Health and Welfare committee in the Senate, and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Houses Medicaid Committee. I personally delivered the maps to

the aforementioned legislators and had dialog with each member's office about hospice in the State, challenges in hospice, and ways that we could be of assistance to their office.

Lisa, Tiwana and Natalie introduced us to Senator Nancy Collins who is a member of the Health and Welfare committee, and to Representative Steve Holland from their area; both are strong advocates of Hospice and will be key contacts for me in the legislature as we move forward.

**Alliance gets traction in Washington on NCLOS concern**

Several Hospice agencies have been subjected to audits because of 'non cancer length of stay' triggers that have negatively affected their cash flow. In the Senate and Congressional meetings, legislators were made aware of this concern and asked to intercede on the industries behalf with CMS.

With the outcry from the Alliance as well as other Hospice agencies, CMS was bombarded by phone calls from the Legislature before we left the Hill. A Medicare representative communicated that they got the message; "Stop the calls, CMS is looking into the concern". The problem was far reaching and should bring relief soon to the effected agencies.



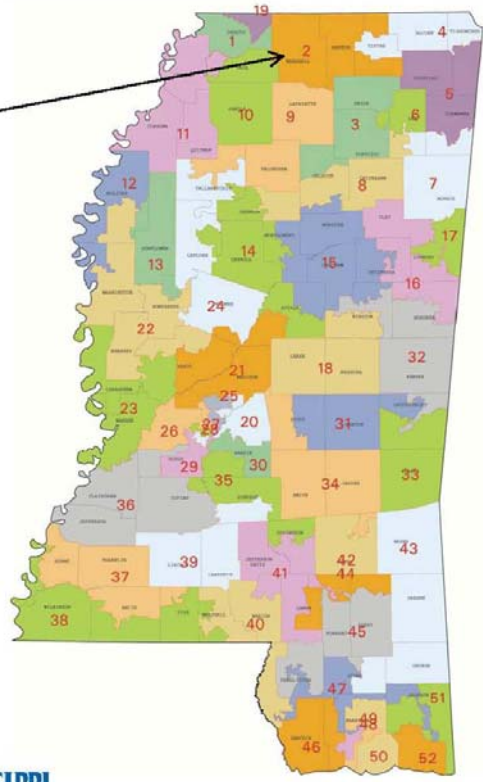
Mississippi Hospice Utilization by State Senate Districts

**Sen. Bill Stone (D2)**

**Benton:** 8,729 Population  
 1,847/75 Medicare Beneficiaries / Deaths  
 46/17 Hospice Admits / Deaths  
 23% District Hospice Utilization  
 0 Medicare Certified Hospices

**Marshall:** 37,144 Population  
 7,110/319 Medicare Beneficiaries / Deaths  
 210/108 Hospice Admits / Deaths  
 34% District Hospice Utilization  
 0 Medicare Certified Hospices

**Tippah:** 22,232 Population  
 5,347/226 Medicare Beneficiaries / Deaths  
 102/67 Hospice Admits / Deaths  
 30% District Hospice Utilization  
 2 Medicare Certified Hospices



**Mississippi 2010 Medicare Data**  
 2,970,036 Population  
 521,272 Medicare Beneficiaries  
 22,053 Medicare Deaths  
 13,145 Medicare Hospice Admits  
 6,819 Medicare Hospice Deaths  
 31% MS Hospice Utilization  
 102 MS Hospices  
 47 Day Median Length of Stay  
 Top 3 DX: Cancer, Circulatory, Nervous



**National 2010 Medicare Data**  
 309,345,935 National Population  
 49,897,266 Medicare Beneficiaries  
 1,975,757 Medicare Deaths  
 812,083 Medicare Hospice Deaths  
 41% National Hospice Utilization  
 3,448 Medicare Certified Hospices  
 31 Days Median Length of Stay  
 Top 3 DX: Cancer, Circulatory, Ill-defined