



Documentation & Compliance

THE CORE of the NICHE bereavement-newsletter program is the sequence of 6 issues. To address your compliance and documentation requirements, NICHE sets up a procedure that provides the clear documentation you need of your bereavement-newsletter program.

THE PROCESS

Supplies of the **HOSPICE & TRANSITION ISSUES** are sent to you to have on hand for precisely timed distribution.

- ❖ The **HOSPICE ISSUE** is given to families at or right after patient intake.
- ❖ The **TRANSITION ISSUE** is distributed to families in the weeks after a patient dies.

Beyond distributing these copies, your primary responsibility is to inform NICHE when your supply of these newsletters is falling below one quarter's reserve. NICHE will help keep track, asking you each quarter if your reserve needs replenishing, as well as whether information needs updating.

- ❖ **FOUR QUARTERLY ISSUES** – Winter, Spring, Summer & Fall/Holiday – are mailed on or about the 25th of January, April, July and October, respectively, for delivery during the 1st week of February, May, August and November.

NICHE takes care of these mailings; your one task here is to **PREPARE & SEND** the Quarterly Mailing List about 4-7 days after each Quarter ends. Each Issue is sent in 4 editions, with content designed for each of the 4 Quarters of each family's year of bereavement as well as that quarter of the calendar.

COMPLIANCE & DOCUMENTATION

NICHE provides you with a procedure that provides the clear documentation of your bereavement-newsletter program that you require in order to address compliance.

Soon after an Issue arrives at the U.S. Post Office for mailing, NICHE emails you a notification stating the date that the

USPS received it and noting delivery to families is expected 5-9 business days later. **PRINT THIS EMAIL** and include it in your Bereavement Documentation Binder or Folder.

Four (4) copies of each Quarterly Issue are mailed to you **AS PART OF THE ACTUAL MAILING**. When they arrive, that signals that, in all likelihood, within a day before or after, ALL the grieving families on your Mailing List are receiving their targeted copy of the issue.

For future audits or other inspections of your bereavement newsletter program, you must document that ALL of your grieving families received all the newsletters. First, include copies of the **HOSPICE & TRANSITION ISSUES** to show the auditor. Next, when the 4 **QUARTERLY** copies arrive, **STAMP** each "RECEIVED" plus the date. Then **PLACE** the copies, along with the email printout, in your Bereavement Documentation Binder or Folder.

Finally, NICHE provides your hospice with an Excel file generated by the mailing house that documents each piece sent, including columns presenting barcoding and other information. This list has provided the necessary proof to the strictest of auditors.

HIPAA Compliance

NICHE requires and, by contract, asks for only the names, addresses and site affiliation of loved ones of your patients. No information (much less sensitive medical information) about the patient is conveyed — no DOD, no relationship status, no patient diagnosis or cause of death. The Mailing Lists and the newsletters provide less direct information than a typical publicly published obituary.