Dear Tony,

The National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care (Coalition) is seeking funding to support the dissemination of the Message Lab work in an effort to ensure that the results of this project are utilized by the broadest possible audience through specific and targeted stakeholder engagement.

The Coalition is the trusted and neutral convener of 10 national member organizations working together to advocate for health care policies and programs that improve the care of patients and families living with serious illness. In 2017, the Coalition gathered over 50 national organizations for the NCP Strategic Directions Summit and coordinated 16 national organizations working together that led to the consensus and publication of the NCP Guidelines, 4th edition. When published, the National Consensus Project Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care were endorsed by over 90 national organizations. The successful planning, launch, and broad national endorsement of the Guidelines included a specific communications strategy to encourage other organizations to be our messenger and to consistently communicate that the goal of these new guidelines is to improve access to quality palliative care for all people living with serious illness regardless of their diagnosis, prognosis, age or where they live or receive care.

This was achieved by working with these organizations over the course of 18 months in a tiered approach (bi-monthly communications over the course of 18 months to all 150 organizations, 50 of these organizations selected to attend a Summit, and selection of 16 national organizations to serve on the NCP Steering Committee). Because of early

and longitudinal engagement in the process, organizations were much more likely to “buy-in” to the final product at the end because they had been involved both in its development and several iterations of review. With a similar goal, the Coalition was recently awarded a federal subrecipient grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to focus on stakeholder engagement in the development of two new palliative care quality measures for the seriously ill population. We are working with 17 national organizations to “co-create” these new quality measures to improve the likelihood that when finished they will be embraced by all health care providers serving people living with serious illness.

We have learned from this model that early engagement is key – “the process is the product”. The Coalition is proposing that additional stakeholder organizations (to be determined by the Message Lab leadership in consultation with the Coalition/a suggested list of potential invited organizations is attached) be invited to a Stakeholder Summit to review the communications research, have an opportunity to engage in dialogue and dynamic facilitation to begin the process of “owning” this new information and research in order to embark on the process of behavior change. Simply having the “best research” does not change behavior. If the goal is for the public and the health care system, including the entire hospice and palliative care field, to adhere to the communication principles identified through the Message Lab, we need to begin the process of engaging these stakeholders in the coming year during message development and before any “message slate or principles” is finalized.

This proposal involves an 18-month period of work in collaboration with the Message Lab funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation. The goal is to build stakeholder engagement by extending outreach, awareness and ownership of the need to change the way we talk about palliative care and increasing the willingness to adopt the messaging principles of the Message Lab project.

We are seeking a subrecipient award of $235,500 over the next 18 months to plan, staff and execute this national convening of approximately 40-45 stakeholder organizations/individuals and 2 public webinars for the field and other targeted national stakeholders to build engagement and awareness of the Message slate – the goal is that these organizations will begin to “own” this information and implications of the research and use it in their own communications to the wider health care field. In addition to the field we are recommending strategic selection of additional health care organizations, such as key referral organizations (American College of Cardiology, Heart Failure Society of America, American Society of Clinical Oncology and American
Academy of Neurology as examples) and large patient advocacy organizations (American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and the Alzheimer’s Association) to also attend the Summit. According to the latest research presented by the Center to Advance Palliative Care, “Physician awareness and favorability have improved dramatically in the last 8 years, though confusion about what palliative care is persists”. Targeting these national physician organizations, who are routinely communicating with their members, is essential to accurate communications about palliative care – as Seth Godin has said, any good marketing or communications campaign results in “others telling our story.”

The grant covers the cost of the following:

- Strategic Planning to execute a Summit
  - Staffing a Planning Committee
- Professional facilitation
- Logistical support
- Travel, food and lodging for 40 persons for Summit
- Webinars (2)

The work of the Message Lab is critical – however, without securing the role of wider stakeholder engagement and ensuring the necessary “buy-in” of the wider hospice and palliative care field, and others in the health care community who should be our messengers and communicators about the value of palliative care for the seriously ill, the work may have limited impact. This type of stakeholder engagement is designed to achieve deep penetration across a broad and inclusive landscape of stakeholders in the continuum of care settings, disciplines, and roles to ensure the conclusions of the Message Lab process is recognized, reinforced, repeated, accessible, and routinely utilized by primary and specialty palliative care clinicians, referring physicians, and the healthcare system.

1. **Stakeholder Engagement - Dissemination of the message slate**: Stakeholder engagement with a broader audience is vital to achieving the objectives of the Message Lab.

   **Convene a Message Lab Summit** - The Summit will facilitate an opportunity to provide input on work of the Message Lab to increase awareness and engagement of the broad constituency of stakeholders necessary for behavior change to occur.

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2 Presented on August 7, 2019 Webinar, Key Findings on the Perceptions of Palliative Care, Meier, Diane.
The Message Summit will occur in 2020 and use a dynamic facilitation approach to engage the participants. Invitees would be 30-35 top tier representatives of key organizations or thought leaders in addition to those currently engaged in the Message Lab (total of approximately 40 persons).

- The results of the Summit will be:
  - A wider group or key organizations will consider using the “Message Slate/Platform” after being engaged in the process in a meaningful and longitudinal way
  - Identification of strategies needed by a wide variety of national stakeholders to utilize key messages with their respective audiences;
  - Commitments from participating organizations to share and utilize the message platform
  - Identification and prioritization of key targeted stakeholders for the Message Lab to further scale its implementation and dissemination activities

**Engage new and current stakeholders** - Outreach and engagement to new stakeholders will be pursued once the Message Lab/Coalition leadership undergoes a process to determine which key stakeholders are needed. For example, recent communications research as previously noted, conducted by CAPC, has identified that referring physicians are a critical audience – national organizations representing referring physicians (like the American College of Cardiology) should participate.

2. **Webinars for Stakeholders**: Our project includes two main professional education activities required for widespread dissemination of the results of the Message Lab. Two free webinars will be developed with the Message Lab team and promoted through Coalition channels. Webinars are a good way to reach “rank and file” members of the hospice and palliative care field, and other health care providers. When the Coalition hosted the webinar to launch the NCP Guidelines, 60% of the over 1000 registrants were not affiliated with the Coalition or our member organizations but with one of the other stakeholder organizations. CAPC’s free webinar reporting the results of the current audience research attracted more than 1000 registrants.

**Conclusion**: We believe that the Coalition is the ideal partner and collaborator to focus on broader stakeholder engagement for Message Lab in 2020-2021. The Coalition is
uniquely positioned to serve in this stakeholder engagement role as a result of our strong history of developing consensus-based guidelines and our experience building and retaining an engaged community of stakeholders. Our goal now is to engage and cultivate an inclusive, multi-faceted community of healthcare stakeholders to use the Message Lab as a platform to help ensure individuals and organizations are consistently communicating key themes regarding serious illness care with the goal of improving access to medical care that matches the goals and priorities of older adults living with a serious illness. With the support of a grant from the University of Washington/The John A. Hartford Foundation, the Coalition will be able to help achieve the objectives of this project. Thank you for your interest in our work and we look forward to discussing the project in more detail.

Sincerely,

Amy Melnick, MPA
Executive Director
National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care

Cc: Diane E. Meier, MD
President, NCHPC

Enclosures
List of possible invited organizations
Draft budget