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From: Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter
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Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2024 4:00 AM
To: Cordt Kassner
Subject: Your Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter for 01/11/24

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January 11th, 2024

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Headlines

[**Have you been overcharged for prescription drugs? We want to hear from you.**](#)

The New York Times, by Reed Abelson and Rebecca Robbins; 1/9/24

Most prescriptions in the United States are handled by one of three companies: CVS Caremark, Express Scripts or Optum Rx. These pharmacy benefit managers serve as middlemen between the drug companies that make the medications and the insurance plans that pay for your prescriptions. These relationships have been in the news because of the high cost of prescription drugs. We want to hear about your experiences with these companies, including whether your medications were covered and how much you paid for them. We're also interested in hearing from pharmacists and doctors about their experiences and those of their patients.

[**Labor Department issues independent contractor final rule**](#)

McKnights Senior Living, by Lois Bowers; 1/9/24

Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su

The Department of Labor this morning issued a [final rule](#) that will change how senior living companies and other employers determine who is an employee and who is an independent contractor. The rule is effective March 11. "The misclassification of employees as independent contractors may deny workers minimum wage, overtime pay and other protections," the Labor Department said in an [online post](#). "This final rule will reduce the risk that employees are misclassified as independent contractors while providing a consistent approach

for businesses that engage with individuals who are in business for themselves.”

Editor's Note: [Click here for the final rule.](#)

Hospice Provider News

[Haven Hospice dementia program gets \\$25K grant](#)

Lake City Reporter; 1/9/24

Used to providing support, Haven Hospice’s Dementia Care Program was on the receiving end recently. Haven received a \$25,000 grant in support of its dementia program from the Thomas A. Plein Foundation.



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[Lincoln County's man and woman of the year named](#)

Lake Norman Media Group, by Michelle T. Bernard; 1/10/24

... At one time, there were no hospice services in Lincoln County. [Normand] Lavasseur and a few other individuals got together and in 1987 got a license to operate Hospice and Palliative Care of Lincoln County. “I was on the board of directors and they said they needed a male nurse,” he said. “I told them I could do that and went to community college and got my CNA 1 and CNA 2. This was back when I was still working at Mohican Mill in Maiden. On my lunch hour I used to take off and go and give a bath or some other service to someone who needed it. I worked as a volunteer for hospice for 37 years.”

Editor's Note: Inspiring story about the beginnings of Hospice and Palliative Care of Lincoln County (North Carolina)

[Community Foundation of Henderson announces grant winners](#)

WSO AM & FM; 1/8/24

St. Anthony’s Hospice received \$15,000 to help sustain and grow its goal of increasing use of its palliative care program in the community which is currently

not covered by Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement in the home setting. The benefit comes from patients choosing Hospice earlier in their terminal care and improving quality of life for the patient and families.

[SBL opens Willow Breeze Hospice House](#)

My Radio Link; 1/9/24

Willow Breeze, the Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospice House, opened Jan. 4. ... It is licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health, Coles County Public Health and The Joint Commission. Willow Breeze features eight private suites for people of all ages who are facing end-of-life difficulties. Each suite has a private bathroom and walk-out patio that overlooks the landscaped pond.



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Palliative Care Provider News

[Clinician perspectives on virtual specialty palliative care for patients with advanced illnesses](#)

Journal of Palliative Medicine, Pub Med online ahead of print, by Tamar Klaiman, Jenna Steckel, Caleb Hearn, Amaya Diana, William J Ferrell, Ezekiel J Emanuel, Amol S Navathe, Ravi B Parikh; 1/10/24

Research objective: We sought to understand referring clinician perspectives on barriers and facilitators to utilizing virtual tools to increase upstream access to palliative care.

["We can't save lives without you."](#)

PR Newswire, Philadelphia; 1/10/24

Gift of Life's Community & Hospital Partners Advance 50-Year Legacy as the Most Generous Region in the Country ... Gift of Life has coordinated 14,196 donors and 39,469 organs for transplant – more than any other U.S. organ procurement organization (OPO) since the inception of our national donation system in 1988. Yet the need for life-saving organs continues to far exceed the number available. Each day, seventeen people die waiting for a transplant and, every ten

minutes, another child or adult is added to the national waitlist.

Editor's note: Please consider the vital role hospice and palliative care providers have in organ and tissue donation...

Clinical News

Courageous Parents Network: Decade of helping parents cope with grief and loss

Fig City News, by Julie M. Cohen; 1/9/24

"The reason grief can be so hard is because it can feel so isolating," Julia Ong reflected while discussing the 2021 death of her younger child, Avery. Even before their daughter died, the Newton resident and her husband, Jordan Bray, experienced the crushing weight of grief upon learning the baby's diagnosis. They soon learned about a Newton-based nonprofit, the Courageous Parents Network (CPN). The organization, which in 2024 is marking its 10th anniversary, "orients and empowers parents and others caring for children with serious medical conditions, by providing resources and tools that reflect the experience and perspective of other families and clinicians," according to its website ...

Editor's note: Also see the Courageous Parents Network website: <https://courageousparentsnetwork.org/>.



TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

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Regulatory News

Local Coverage Determination (LCD) Update: Home Health and Hospice

CMS / Palmetto GBA email; 1/10/24

The Hospice: The Adult Failure to Thrive Syndrome L34558 LCD was revised. Please review this update and share it with your staff.

[CMS terminates 2 Centene Medicare Advantage plans](#)

Modern Healthcare, by Nona Tepper; 1/8/24

A pair of Centene Medicare Advantage plans must suspend enrollment and marketing because of poor star ratings, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services notified the company.

[Nurse pleads guilty to federal charge for stealing pain medications at Baxter clinic](#)

Brainerd Dispatch; 1/9/24

A registered nurse pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining prescription opioid pain medications from a hospice clinic, United States Attorney Andrew M. Luger announced Tuesday, Jan. 9. ... Cambie Elizabeth Broker, 33, was a registered nurse case manager at a hospice clinic in Baxter. Broker used her position to fraudulently obtain controlled substances from the clinic. Broker entered false prescription requests into the clinic's e-prescribing software to fraudulently obtain oxycodone, hydromorphone, and fentanyl for illegal sale and personal use.

Mergers & Aquisition News

[PE firms adapting hospice 'roll-up' strategies](#)

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 1/8/24

Private equity firms in the hospice space are adapting their "roll-up" strategies as economic uncertainties persist. Roll ups are a common approach to private equity investment. This occurs when a firm buys a larger platform company and then gradually acquires smaller organizations to foster growth.

Post-Acute Care News

[Sustainability of our healthcare system; Day 2 notes from the 42nd annual J.P. Morgan healthcare conference](#)

LexBlog, by Eric Klein; 1/10/24

Sustainability of our healthcare system was an interesting topic at Day 2 of the 42nd Annual J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference. Paul Markovich, CEO of Blue Shield of California, expressed the concern that "[T]he status quo is an existential threat to our healthcare system." Markovich is worried that the healthcare system is losing the public's trust – which will make it harder to effectively fix our system – while also not delivering the quality of care and accessibility needed by our population.

[Top home care trends for 2024](#)

Home Health Care News, by Andrew Donlan; 1/9/24

The rising costs of care in home care remain a trend in 2024. That one trend will also lead to others, however, such as increased M&A, adoption of future-facing technologies like AI, and further investment in tangential service lines and alternative payer sources.

General News

[Maine governor dedicates \\$2.5 million to support elderly population through innovative program](#)

BNN, by Saboor Bayat; 1/9/24

In an unprecedented move, Governor Janet Mills is allocating \$2.5 million of federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to bolster support for Maine's aging population. Aiming to enhance the lives of older adults and their caregivers, this initiative pioneers the establishment of community-based navigator roles for a more efficient connection to essential resources.

[Danger on the job: Workers suffer the most injuries in these 25 jobs](#)

NewsCenter1, by Colleen Kilday; 1/9/24

Editor's Note: For HR leaders, 12 of the 25 are from healthcare jobs. How does this data compare with your employees' job-related injuries and illnesses?

#3 Nursing assistants

#5 Occupational therapy aids

#6 Orderlies

#10 Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses

#11 Health information technologies, medical registrars, surgical assistants, and health care practitioners and technical workers, all other

#20 Respiratory therapists

#23 Medical and health services managers

#24 Registered nurse

[Agrace partners with nonprofit SAGE to meet needs of LGBT community elders](#)

In Business - Greater Madison; 1/8/24

... At least 80% of the nonprofit's staff have completed annual cultural competence training about the needs and concerns of the LGBT community. SAGE, the country's oldest and largest nonprofit organization dedicated to

improving the lives of LGBT older adults, reports that discrimination, harassment, and violence often lead LGBT elders to become ill at an earlier age than their straight peers. Agrace has partnered with SAGE to provide services including hospice, supportive (palliative) care, adult day care, grief support, and nonmedical senior care and serve elders across southern Wisconsin.

International News

[My husband's death in hospice care made me more opposed to assisted suicide, says Nadine Dorries](#)

The Telegraph, by Dominic Penna; 1/10/24

Paul Dorries, who died of bowel cancer in June 2019, asked to travel to the [Dignitas clinic](#) in Switzerland to end his life as soon as he received his terminal diagnosis, the former culture secretary [Nadine Dorries] said. But setting out her opposition to the “distressing” practice of assisted suicide, Ms Dorries said her husband had eventually been glad to spend his final weeks in palliative care surrounded by loved ones. ... “The peaceful way he died at home four months later – surrounded by his loving family – only reinforced my strong view that assisted dying is wrong.”

Today's Encouragement

If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: If we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome. — Anne Bradstreet

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