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Headlines

CMS looks to tackle Medicare Advantage's 'black box'

Becker's Payer Issues, by Rylee Wilson; 1/26/24

CMS is [seeking input](#) on improving transparency in the Medicare Advantage program. The agency issued a request for information Jan. 25, seeking public feedback on how data collection and transparency in the program can be improved. In a news release, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said increased transparency is key to increasing competitiveness in the program and ensuring Medicare dollars are spent correctly.

Most US adults fail to recognize heart disease as leading killer of Americans, study find

HCP Live, by Patrick Campbell; 1/24/24

The American Heart Association's annual report on heart disease and stroke statistics for 2024 sheds new light on the impact and level of public education surrounding the impact of heart disease and stroke in the US and abroad.

Changing payment dynamics are forcing home-based care providers to level up in value-based care

Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 1/24/24

When home-based care professionals were tasked with providing the “greatest challenge” facing them in the new year, 58% responded staffing. After that, 31% said changing payment dynamics, while 7% and 4% said consolidation or non-payment regulatory changes, respectively. Those findings come from a [recent survey](#) conducted by Home Health Care News and Homecare Homebase.



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Evaluation of the Medicare Care Choices Model: Annual / Final report

CMMI Evaluation Digest, 1/25/24

The six-year Medicare Care Choices Model (MCCM) tested whether offering eligible fee-for-service Medicare beneficiaries the option to receive supportive and palliative care services through hospice providers without forgoing payment for the treatment of their terminal conditions (which is required to enroll in the Medicare hospice benefit) improved beneficiaries’ quality of life and care, increased their satisfaction, and reduced Medicare expenditures.

Hospice Provider News

Kaiser Permanente notches perfect score on disability inclusion

AMA, by Andis Robeznieks; 1/24/24

... [Kaiser Permanente] received a 100% score on the most recent Disability Equality Index, the seventh year in a row in which Kaiser Permanente has done so. The index was created by Disability: IN, a global organization that promotes disability inclusion and equality in business, and the American Association of People with Disabilities, a national organization that advocates for full civil rights for more than 60 million Americans with disabilities. The index benchmarks companies based on culture, leadership, accessibility, employment practices, community engagement and supplier diversity.

Haven Hospice receives \$25k for dementia care

The Ponte Vedra Recorder, by Anthony Richards; 1/25/24

Haven Hospice recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Thomas A. Plein Foundation that will go toward supporting its dementia care program. The program is all about promoting education of dementia and what it entails for members of the Haven staff, patient caregivers and community partners. ... The grant will help in the creation of memory cafes and caregiver support groups, as well as helping fund additional tools designed to help dementia patients.



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Provider rebrands as Rainbow Community Care

Watertown Daily Times; 1/25/24

Rainbow Hospice Care, a trusted local provider of hospice care for over three decades, has rebranded to Rainbow Community Care. This transformation reflects its Board's longstanding commitment to provide a broad spectrum of services that supports patients and families throughout the entire aging journey, not just at end-of-life. ... "It has been a tremendous honor to be viewed as the area's cornerstone hospice provider for so many years," said CEO Karen Carrig.

Petoskey hospice center to close with transition to community-based care

Interlochen Public Radio, by Ed Ronco; 1/26/24

A hospice center in Petoskey will shut down, despite earlier statements by officials that there were no plans to do so. McLaren Health Management Group said Friday that it "will no longer continue operations" at the seven-bed Hiland Cottage, effective March 1. McLaren Hospice says it's transitioning its care to community-based services. A statement from McLaren says patients and staff at Hiland Cottage will be moved to other facilities "in coordination with patient family, caregivers, and providers."

Why hospice utilization rates have fallen

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 1/25/24

National hospice utilization rates have fallen since 2020, though the total

number of patients served remains consistent. ... Mathematically, the percentage declined in part because of continually changing demographics.

Publisher's note: This article quotes a decline in Medicare hospice utilization rates through 2021, which is true. However, we are seeing a rebound / increase in 2022 and 2023 information.



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Androscoggin Home Healthcare & Hospice CEO receives service award

Sun Journal (ME); 1/26/24

LEWISTON — Kenneth Albert, president and CEO of Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice, has received the Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine's 2023 Distinguished Service Award.

Publisher's note: A "subscribe" box appears when accessing this article, but can be declined.

Palliative Care Provider News

Series of 19 online videos address palliative care issues

Press-Republican, by Robin Caudell; 1/26/24

Project Compassion began with conversations over coffee after Mass between a doctor and a retired priest. Seventy-one percent of U.S. adults have never heard of palliative care. More than 12 million adults are living with a serious illness now and that number is growing exponentially, according to a press release. To help address this need, Project Compassion was developed by Father Charles

Vavonese and Dr. Paul Fiacco thanks to a \$500,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation.

Sojourns Scholar grant funds Doyon's project to improve refugee palliative care

Boise State News; 1/26/24

Assistant Professor Katherine (Kate) Doyon was recently announced as one of the Cambia Health Foundation's 2023 Sojourns Scholars. ... Doyon's project will create an online curriculum for community health workers who work with seriously-ill resettled refugees in Idaho. The curriculum will integrate [palliative care](#) principles into their training. Grounding her work in cultural humility, Doyon's goal is to collaboratively develop, assess and distribute the curriculum by partnering with resettled refugees, clinicians who care for refugees and resettlement agencies.

Clinical News

Use of complementary health approaches overall and for pain management by US adults

JAMA, by Richard L. Nahin, MPH, PhD; Amber Rhee, MHS; Barbara Stussman, BA; 1/25/24

Millions of US adults use complementary health approaches (CHAs) each year; ... Previously, the safety and efficacy of many of these approaches lacked rigorous clinical trials. Over the past 2 decades, increasing evidence has supported the safety and efficacy of selected approaches for pain management. We examined trends in CHA use among US adults at 3 time points: 2002, 2012, and 2022.

New blood test that screens for Alzheimer's may be a step closer to reality, study suggests

CNN, by Jacqueline Howard; 1/22/24

Testing a person's blood for a type of protein called phosphorylated tau, or p-tau, could be used to screen for Alzheimer's disease with "high accuracy," even before symptoms begin to show, a new study suggests.

Regulatory News

In-home care providers await updates on CMS Medicaid proposal, begin preparing for 80/20 rule

Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 1/23/24

Drawing parallels between the intentions of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the narrative of a Charles Dickens novel is an uncommon venture. ... “When the 80/20 rule came out, many of us saw this as a ‘Tale of Two Cities’ situation,” Dave Totaro, chief government affairs officer at Bayada Home Health Care, recently said during a Home Health Care News webinar.

Public Policy News

Guiding Values for Health Policy in Divided Times

JAMA Network, by Sandro Galea, MD, DrPh; 1/25/24

What values should guide health policy during divided times?

- Policy Humility
- Radical Compassion
- Reasoned Reform

Minnesota lawmakers kick off debate on joining other states that permit physician-assisted suicide

The Associated Press, by Steve Karnowski; 1/25/24

The Minnesota Legislature kicked off debate Thursday on whether the state should join the list of those that allow physician-assisted suicide.

Research News

Groundbreaking research by PFF scholars

Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation; 1/22/24

The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation (PFF), the nation’s leading pulmonary fibrosis research, advocacy, and education organization has announced five awardees for the 2023 cycle of PFF Scholars who will receive funding for their cutting-edge research. ... “The most recent PFF Scholars class is tackling some of the most urgent questions about pulmonary fibrosis,” said Scott Staszak, PFF Chief Operating Officer. “Our goal is to accelerate the Scholars’ research and support them in securing more substantial grants for their impactful work.”

Post-Acute Care News

Steward Texas medical center closing campus

Becker's Hospital CFO Report, by Madeline Ashley; 1/25/24

Port Arthur-based the Medical Center of Southeast Texas, part of Dallas-based Steward Health Care, is closing its Beaumont campus, including its emergency department and all hospital-related services, effective Feb. 2.

General News

Fort Morgan hospice patient and criminal justice graduate accomplishes dream of becoming a juvenile advocate

The Fort Morgan Times, by Robin Northrup; 1/25/24

Fort Morgan resident Raquel Marquez has always wanted to be a juvenile advocate. Her passion is to protect the rights and interests of children involved in the legal system — those who are victims of abuse, neglect, or crime. ... In 2013, during her first year of college, Marquez was diagnosed with brain cancer. Even after learning about her diagnosis, she stayed in school and finished her degree. Now at home in the care of her family and Hospice of the Plains, Marquez had her dream fulfilled at her home on Wednesday by Hospice of the Plains representative Leon Midkiff, Morgan County Sheriff Dave Martin, and 13th Judicial District's Victim Advocate, Jill Olsen.

'What my terminal cancer diagnosis taught me about life'

BBC News, by Nicola Bryan; 1/27/24

Forget striving for a bigger home and a better car. Slow down, be grateful for what you have and take time with the people you love. This is the advice from Megan McClay, 30, who is living with terminal cancer. ... Megan's story is one of several being told at 'What matters most?', an exhibition at Senedd Oriel at the Senedd, or Welsh Parliament in Cardiff Bay [Wales]. Through photographs and short films the exhibition shares the perspectives of people with terminal illnesses, their families and those who work in palliative care.

Editor's Note: [Click here for this exhibition's "What matters most?" website, film, and many video stories.](#)

Today's Encouragement

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit. - Aristotle

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