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Contents

- [1. As denials climb, MACPAC approves recommendations for managed care oversight](#)
- [2. Health care workers kept leaving the industry after pandemic: study](#)
- [3. Avow Kids awarded grant for children experiencing loss](#)
- [4. For people with dementia and their caretakers, Phoenix-area groups ease challenges](#)
- [5. Your 2024 guide to Joint Commission changes - Becker's Hospital Review](#)
- [6. Hospice Nurse Shares The unexplained experience with a patient that changed her view on death and dying](#)
- [7. 'Crying wolf' or dying breed? Incentives often ignore plight of rural skilled nursing operators](#)
- [8. As Maryland considers medical aid in dying, here's how it's playing out in DC](#)
- [9. Will scandal at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute cause big damage?](#)
- [10. Criteria for enrollment of patients with COPD in palliative care trials: A systematic review](#)

11. New UMass Chan patient communication training simulation program receives funding via Catalyst Award
12. Despite need, adequate dementia care severely lacking among adult day service providers
13. Alzheimer's Association calls for federal involvement to increase dementia care workforce, training in assisted living
14. Senate probes the cost of assisted living and its burden on American families
15. Policymakers, providers must take steps to prevent staff mass turnover, researchers say
16. Regular primary care nurse visits can improve home care outcomes, study finds
17. New health study highlights importance of tailored end-of-life care planning
18. OIG to audit CMS oversight of state-contracted nursing home surveyors
19. Smile in the sky drawn for Worcester hospice patient
20. How does health spending in the U.S. compare to other countries?
21. What's next for Public Health?
22. How AccentCare is using communication, career development to address caregiver burnout
23. Understanding palliative care; why a mindset change is needed to address gaps
24. Wesley Homes announces three new hires
25. Today's Encouragement: ... the life in your days ...

Headlines

As denials climb, MACPAC approves recommendations for managed care oversight

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 1/29/24

The Medicaid and CHIP Payment Advisory Commission on Friday approved seven recommendations to enhance congressional oversight of Medicaid managed care organizations as recent reports reveal startlingly high rates of prior authorization denials.

Health care workers kept leaving the industry after pandemic: study

Axios, by Tina Reed, 1/29/24

There's been a "substantial and persistent" increase in health care workers

leaving the industry since the pandemic, as staff who stayed on during the worst of COVID-19 leave for new opportunities in a robust jobs market, according to a new study in [JAMA Health Forum](#). ... Details: The Johns Hopkins-led study, based on Census data from the beginning of 2018 through the end of 2021, found a disproportionate number of women and Black workers exiting the health industry.

Hospice Provider News

Avow Kids awarded grant for children experiencing loss

Florida Weekly - Naples Edition; 1/25/24

Avow has been awarded a \$55,300 grant from Champions for Learning as part of a multi-agency Future Ready Collier collaboration project to fund resiliency programming. Funds are designated to Avow Kids, which provides support to children ages 5-17 who are experiencing grief or loss in any capacity. The grant will ensure the continued availability of the program and its resources, which are offered at no cost to participants



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Clinical News

For people with dementia and their caretakers, Phoenix-area groups ease challenges

azcentral / Arizona Republic, by Alexis Waiss; 1/28/24

Several Season for Sharing nonprofits provide support for people experiencing memory loss and respite for caregivers, including:

- Banner Alzheimer's Foundation in Phoenix received \$10,000 to provide culturally sensitive dementia education ...

- Sun Health Foundation in Surprise received \$7,500 to help more than 2,000 families caring for a loved one with dementia ...
- Hospice of the Valley in Phoenix received \$10,000 to support its Dementia Care and Education Campus ...

Your 2024 guide to Joint Commission changes - Becker's Hospital Review

Becker's Hospital Review, by Ashleigh Hollowell; 1/26/24

The Joint Commission is cutting more than 200 standards across its accreditation programs, many of which will take effect July 1. The organization initially announced its plans to scale back standards at this scale in July 2023, describing it as the "second tranche of major standards' reduction" following [a first round](#) of cuts in December 2022. ... [Among these], Home Care will receive a 15% reduction in performance elements.

Hospice Nurse Shares The unexplained experience with a patient that changed her view on death and dying

Your Tango, by Nia Tipton; 1/29/24

Death is the most mysterious part of the cycle of life for many individuals. [What happens when we die?](#) Is it peaceful? Is it scary? The unknown of what becomes of our souls once our physical presence leaves this Earth can be a daunting thought, but a hospice nurse named Julie offered some insight that she was a firsthand witness to after an elderly patient she'd been looking after passed away.



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Regulatory News

'Crying wolf' or dying breed? Incentives often ignore plight of rural skilled nursing operators

McKnights Long-Term Care News, by Kimberly Marselas; 1/29/24

As hundreds of nursing homes have shuttered in the last few years, the very

strategies meant to prop up the sector have often left the most isolated, resource-strapped facilities with nothing gained. ... [They] have largely failed to take into account the unique conditions of rural facilities.

Public Policy News

As Maryland considers medical aid in dying, here's how it's playing out in DC

Capital News Service, by Sapna Bansil; 1/29/24

A 74-year-old man with Lou Gehrig's disease. An 88-year-old man with congestive heart failure. A 54-year-old woman with cancer. ... In Maryland, aid-in-dying proposals in past years have faced [pushback](#) from a number of opponents. ... But advocates say there's unprecedented momentum this year for an aid-in-dying law in Maryland – in part because arguments for the option have been strengthened by its implementation in D.C. and 10 other states.

Research News

Will scandal at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute cause big damage?

Modern Healthcare, by Caroline Hudson; 1/29/24

Allegations of data manipulation in Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's research has sparked intense scrutiny of a long-revered pillar in cancer treatment and put its once-sparkling reputation into question. ... Retaining Dana-Farber's long-term standing and preserving its bottom line will depend on how fast the institute moves to control the fallout from a scandal that has made national headlines, marketing and risk management experts said.



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Criteria for enrollment of patients with COPD in palliative care trials: A systematic review

J Pain Symptom Manage, by Natalia Smirnova, Allison V Lange, Amanda Glickman, Kristen Desanto, Cara L McDermott, Donald R Sullivan, David B Bekelman, Dio Kavalieratos; 1/25/24

Context: Use of palliative care interventions in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) has increased in recent years and inclusion criteria used to identify patients with COPD appropriate for palliative care vary widely. We evaluated the inclusion criteria to identify ways to improve enrollment opportunities for patients with COPD.

New UMass Chan patient communication training simulation program receives funding via Catalyst Award

UMass Chan News, by Pat Sargent; 1/29/24

The program, "Apology and Disclosure: Developing Competency for Patient Safety and Equity," is led by Stacy E. Potts, MD, MEd, professor of family medicine & community health and senior associate dean for graduate medical education and clinical affairs; and Sunita Puri, MD, MS, associate professor of medicine and program director of the hospice and palliative medicine fellowship. ... The Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation Catalyst Award is for \$50,000 over one year.

Post-Acute Care News

Despite need, adequate dementia care severely lacking among adult day service providers

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 1/29/24

... More than a quarter of adult day service patients have been diagnosed with dementia, including Alzheimer's, according to a recent National Health Statistics Report by the HHS and CDC. ... Roughly 23% of adult day service center (ADSC) patients with dementia are enrolled in a center that lacks the capabilities to adequately care for their condition.

Alzheimer's Association calls for federal involvement to increase dementia care workforce, training in assisted living

McKnights Senior Living, by Lois A. Bowers; 1/29/24

"Congress should consider the steps it can take at the federal level, including expanding the necessary workforce and improving dementia training standards and access," as part of efforts to "help ensure a quality direct care workforce that can meet the unique needs of our nation's growing number of Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementia" in assisted living communities and elsewhere, the Alzheimer's Association and its advocacy affiliate, the Alzheimer's Impact Movement, said in comments submitted to the US Senate Special Committee on Aging for the record of the hearing it held Thursday, titled "Assisted Living Facilities: Understanding Long-Term Care Options for Older Adults."

Senate probes the cost of assisted living and its burden on American families

KFF Health News, by Jordan Rau; 1/25/24

A U.S. Senate committee on Thursday launched an examination of assisted living, holding its first hearing in two decades on the industry as leaders of both parties expressed concern about the high cost and mixed quality of the long-term care facilities. The federal government has minimal oversight of assisted living, which is regulated by states, unlike skilled nursing homes.

Policymakers, providers must take steps to prevent staff mass turnover, researchers say

McKnights Senior Living, by Kathleen Steele Gaivin, 1/29/24

Employment levels in the skilled nursing industry are lagging compared with other parts of the healthcare continuum, noted the authors of a study published

Friday in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. ... Employment levels have been offset to some degree by hiring of agency staff, which the authors claim may affect resident/patient care by disrupting the continuity of care and “by diminishing the years of experience of the workforce.”

Regular primary care nurse visits can improve home care outcomes, study finds

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 1/23/24

A planned visit program involving primary healthcare nurse practitioners (PHCNPs) can reduce rates of hospitalization and emergency department use among home care patients, researchers found in a recent study published by the *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*.

New health study highlights importance of tailored end-of-life care planning

Health, by Quadri Adejumo; 1/28/24

In a groundbreaking study from Rutgers Health, millions of Medicare records were analyzed to discern the end-of-life care trajectories of older Americans. Published in the *BMC Geriatrics* journal, the investigation scrutinized the final three years of clinical records for Medicare beneficiaries who passed away in 2018.

OIG to audit CMS oversight of state-contracted nursing home surveyors

McKnights Long-Term Care, by Josh Henreckson; 1/23/24

A top federal watchdog will audit the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' nursing home survey practices in 2024, according to a new report. Though sparse on details, the Jan. 16 announcement highlights concerns that third-party contractors may not have sufficient oversight to ensure proper performance of nursing home surveys.

General News

Smile in the sky drawn for Worcester hospice patient

BBC News, by Vanessa Pearce; 1/27/24

An aerobatic pilot has put on a special show for a patient with a lifelong passion for aircraft who is being cared for at a hospice. Pilot Rich Goodwin created the sky high smile above the St. Richard's Hospice in Worcester. Former

transportation engineer Ray Stanton, 66, enjoyed the show with his wife, Angela, and two children. "To see the smile in the sky and then look at Ray's smile was just fantastic," said Mrs. Stanton.

How does health spending in the U.S. compare to other countries?

Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker, by Emma Wager, Matthew McGough, Shameek Rakshit, Krutika Amin, Cynthia Cox; 1/23/24

In this chart collection, we examine how U.S. health spending compares to health spending in other OECD countries that are similarly large and wealthy, based on median GDP and median GDP per capita. Relative to the size of its economy, the U.S. spends a greater amount on health care than other high-income nations

What's next for Public Health?

Health Affairs Forefront, by Michael Yudell, Joseph J. Amon; 1/23/24

Public health in the United States is in crisis. ... If public health is "what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy," then it is time to do just that, capitalizing on this moment to lead with our values of professionalism and trust, health and safety, health justice and equity, interdependence and solidarity, human rights and liberty, and inclusivity and engagement. These are values that many Americans share, and we must work to convince a skeptical public that can be deeply cynical of our field, that we are here to listen and to help as we fight to improve the public's health.

How AccentCare is using communication, career development to address caregiver burnout

Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 1/28/24

As the home-based care industry continues to evolve, enhancing the well-being of employees and addressing caregiver burnout remains a top priority for providers. It's not uncommon for caregivers to experience moments of feeling unsupported or undervalued. That can often lead to a sense of disconnection within the company from the bottom to the top. To help that disconnect, providers like AccentCare have focused on retention initiatives that are based around communication within the organization.

International News

Understanding palliative care; why a mindset change is needed to address gaps

The New York Times, by Linda M. Kagire; 1/29/24

What do you do when you are told that your loved one has a serious illness or condition that cannot be cured or leaves them with serious complications until death? For many families in Rwanda and the patients themselves, it is a huge dilemma.

Other News

Wesley Homes announces three new hires

Wesley Homes, a nonprofit offering senior housing and care services in the Puget Sound region, has announced three new hires in separate press releases.

- Kevin McNamara is the company's new vice president of operations ... [overseeing] the day-to-day operations of Wesley's senior living communities. ...
- Ken Klotz, a 20-year senior living and memory care veteran, is now executive director at Wesley Des Moines. ...
- Kelly Pajinag [is]the executive director of Wesley Health & Home Care ... [overseeing] Wesley Homes Community Health Services, Wesley Homes at Home, Wesley Hospice, and Wesley Palliative Care.

Today's Encouragement

It's not the days in your life, but the life in your days that counts. – Brian White

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