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Headlines

Top 5 digital health priorities for health systems

Becker's Health IT, by Giles Bruce; 1/31/24

Nearly two-thirds of health system C-suite leaders say digital health is easing access to care, though using it to improve patient experience has fallen as a tech priority for executives, a new study found. ... [According] to the Jan.

22 report from management consultant Sage Growth Partners ... [here are] the top five digital health priorities for the next 12 months, per the survey of 108 hospital and health system C-suite executives:

1. Care coordination: 67%
2. Telehealth: 53%
3. Remote patient monitoring: 50%
4. Patient self-scheduling: 46%
5. Revenue cycle solutions: 44%

Hospice fraud back in the spotlight, with new data also raising questions about home health care

Home Health Care News, by Robert Holly; 1/30/24

The number of hospice providers enrolled in the Medicare program in four states has skyrocketed over the past few years. The jaw-dropping spike, in turn, has triggered increased oversight efforts – some of which may not be having the desired effect. A similar trend could be happening in home health care in one major county, U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) data suggests. In hospice, the surge of new providers and potentially fraudulent activities has been concentrated in Arizona, California, Nevada and Texas. In home health care, it's Los Angeles County.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issues rule: Medicare Program; Calendar Year (CY) 2024 Home Health (HH) Prospective Payment System rate update; HH Quality Reporting Program requirements; HH ...

Department of Health and Human Services, by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; 1/31/24

SUMMARY: This document corrects technical errors in the final rule that appeared in the November 13, 2023 Federal Register titled "Medicare Program; Calendar Year (CY) 2024 Home Health (HH) Prospective Payment System Rate Update; HH Quality Reporting Program Requirements; HH Value-Based Purchasing Expanded Model Requirements; Home Intravenous Immune Globulin Items and Services; Hospice Informal Dispute Resolution and Special Focus Program Requirements, Certain Requirements for Durable Medical Equipment Prosthetics and Orthotics Supplies; and Provider and Supplier Enrollment Requirements" (referred to hereafter as the "CY 2024 HH PPS final rule").

Effective date: This correcting document is effective January 31, 2024



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Hospice Provider News

Festive crowd brings in \$130k for Compass Hospice

The Star, by Connie Connolly; 1/31/24

Women attired in glittering gowns, men sporting bow ties, plenty of laughter and conversation, and a sumptuous dinner signaled a joyful evening gala Friday, Jan. 26 on the Chesapeake Bay's shore in Stevensville. But beyond the glamour was a goal more than met by the evening's festivities. Compass Regional Hospice's annual gala raised \$130,500 to benefit hospice care, supportive care and grief support services for Queen Anne's, Kent and Caroline counties.

Skowhegan nonprofits say they have moved on after former director stole thousands

Portland Press Herald, by Jake Freudberg; 1/30/24

Jason Gayne, the former executive director of the Skowhegan Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County, began his prison sentence Monday for stealing thousands from the nonprofits, but leaders of the two organizations said they have already worked to move forward. For the last two years, the Skowhegan Regional Chamber of Commerce has had a clear goal: returning the organization to its members. "From the ground up, we rebuilt everything," said Luke York, the chair of the chamber's board of directors.

Clinical News

Predictors of early hospice or death in patients with inoperable lung cancer treated with curative intent

Clin Lung Cancer, by Siddharth Ramanathan, Kimberly A Hochstedler, Anna M Laucis, Benjamin Movsas, Craig W Stevens, Larry L Kestin, Michael M Dominello, & nbsp;Inga S Grills, Martha Matuszak, James Hayman, Peter A Paximadis, Matthew J Schipper, Shruti Jolly, Thomas P Boike; Michigan Radiation Oncology Quality Consortium; NCBI published 1/31/24

Introduction: Treatment for inoperable stage II to III non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) involves chemo-radiotherapy (CRT). However, some patients transition to hospice or die early during their treatment course. We present a model to prognosticate early poor outcomes in NSCLC patients treated with curative-intent CRT.

Effectiveness of an Advance Care Planning intervention in adults receiving dialysis and their families: A cluster randomized clinical trial

JAMA Network, by Mi-Kyung Song, PhD,

RN; Amita Manatunga, PhD; Laura Plantinga, PhD; 1/29/24

In this randomized clinical trial, the [Advanced Care Planning] ACP intervention implemented by health care workers at dialysis centers improved preparation for EOL decision-making but showed mixed effectiveness on bereavement outcomes. The ACP intervention implemented in dialysis centers may be an effective strategy to the dyad preparation for end-of-life care as opposed to the current focus on advance directives.

Cannabis for neurodegenerative disorders

Cannabis - Science and Technology, by Ruth Fisher; 1/30/24

In this blog installment, we take a deep dive into research on how cannabis affects neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson's disease. ... The information presented in this section comes from the Cleveland Clinics, a nonprofit academic medical center.

Psychedelic therapy debate returns to Missouri General Assembly

Missouri Independent, by Rebecca Rivas; 1/30/24

Numerous clinical studies nationwide have shown positive results from using psilocybin to treat PTSD, depression and substance use. Republican lawmakers are once again pushing legislation that would require Missouri to conduct a clinical study on using psilocybin, more commonly referred to as "magic mushrooms," to treat depression, substance use or as part end-of-life care. ... In the House Veterans Committee on Tuesday, Republican Rep. Aaron McMullen of Independence plans to present an amended version of the bill that would limit its scope to only veterans. The suicide rate among veterans in Missouri is nearly double the state rate and one of the highest in the country. ... McMullen, a veteran who served in a combat unit in Afghanistan, told The Independent,

“While psilocybin is not a panacea for every issue, it represents a first true scientifically-validated hope that we have to address this crisis.”



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Breakthroughs in Alzheimer's research give cause for optimism

Kiplinger, by Elaine Silvestrini; 1/29/24

... Finding a cure or even an effective treatment has been difficult. Now, after billions of dollars in research and more than 100 drug failures, advocates are celebrating breakthroughs, including drugs that for the first time treat the underlying causes of the disease. Experts are optimistic that we may be on the precipice of significant changes in how the disease is treated and potentially even prevented.

The healing power of remembering and recording

LocalTownPages - Franklin; 1/30/24

Every person on this earth holds space in the lives of those around them. We fill that space with our voices, talents, wisdom, laughter, touch, beliefs, innovations, style, and even occasionally with our struggles. Each human experience is unique and varied, complex and beautiful.

Public Policy News

Docs see smaller checks as Congress weighs options on Medicare cut

Modern Healthcare, by Michael Mcauliff; 1/30/24

If anyone were to ask members of Congress if doctors should be contending with

Medicare pay cuts after a pandemic and a period of extraordinary inflation, and amid a chronic physician shortage, nearly all would say no.

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Post-Acute Care News

Video raises concerns about a father's final days in senior care home

The Atlanta-Journal Constitution Online, by Allie Gross; 1/30/24

A 78-year-old veteran's final days at a Georgia senior care home, Savannah Court of Lake Oconee, raise troubling questions about care at the facility and the state's oversight. The new concerns come as the facility faces possible closure with a second license revocation hearing scheduled for Jan. 30, 2024.

Team of caring nurses help end-of-life patients fulfill wedding dreams by arranging hospital ceremonies

People, by Erin Clack; 1/30/24

Natasha Steels-Webb and her colleagues came up with the idea to create boxes filled with wedding essentials to pull off hospital ceremonies. "Myself and a colleague decided to create the wedding box after a patient we were caring for had become very unwell and it was clear she was not going to recover," Steels-Webb said in a [post](#) on the North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust's website. "She had been with her current partner for many years, but they just hadn't got around to getting married — and this was something they both wanted," she continued.

Technology / Innovations News

Regulate Artificial Intelligence in health care by prioritizing patient outcomes

JAMA, by John W. Ayers, PhD, MA; Nimit Desai, BS; Davey M. Smith, MD, MAS; 1/29/24
Artificial intelligence (AI) holds great promise to enhance the quality of health care. Despite the aim of health care regulations to ensure high-quality care, there are few regulations governing the use of AI in health care. This dearth will soon change because a White House executive order instructed the Department of Health and Human Services to develop new AI-specific regulatory strategies addressing equity, safety, privacy, and quality for AI in health care before April 27, 2024.

Can Artificial Intelligence improve doctor-patient visits and reduce burnout?

AAMC News, by Patrick Boyle; 1/30/24

Physicians are testing tools that listen to conversations and create written notes, freeing them to focus on patients and easing documentation burdens. The technology is evolving to address limitations.

General News

Duke University welcomes seventh grader James Walter to the Blue Devil Wrestling Team

BVM Sports; 1/30/24

The 2023-24 Duke wrestling team welcomes new member James Walter, a seventh grader matched with the Blue Devil wrestling program via Team IMPACT. James, a student at Holly Ridge Middle School in N.C., battled serious illness but is now in the long-term maintenance phase of treatment, eager to return to sports. This heartwarming story reflects the power of sports to inspire and uplift individuals facing adversity, showcasing the positive impact of college sports teams in the community.

How people with disabilities make a positive impact in the workplace

Forbes, by Diane Winiarski; 1/30/24

The advantages that people with disabilities bring to their employers are many and varied – from higher revenue and enhanced productivity, to a more positive and supportive environment.

In-cure-able isn't un-care-able: Pope's February intention is the terminally ill

Aleteia, by Kathleen N. Hattrup; 1/30/24

In the month of February, Pope Francis is inviting the whole Church to pray for a renewed commitment to the terminally ill and their families. ... The **World Day of the Sick** was established in 1992 by John Paul II. Pope Francis explains that “when some people talk about terminal illnesses, there are two words they often confuse: incurable and un-care-able. But they are not the same.”

Worcester hospital nurses file complaints over 'dangerous conditions'

MassLive.com, by Susannah Sudborough; 1/30/24

Nurses at Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester have filed official complaints with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and other state agencies over “dangerous conditions” they say are jeopardizing patient safety, the state’s largest nurse’s union announced Tuesday. The complaints are based on over 500 reports made by nurses over the last six months that detail issues such as staffing deficiencies and poor allocation of technology, the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA), which represents the nurses, said in a press release.

St Mary’s Hospice launches community choir to foster wellbeing and connections

BNN, by Safak Costu; 1/30/24

St Mary’s Hospice in Ulverston [United Kingdom] has heralded a new era of community engagement with the inauguration of its unique community choir. The first session, held at the hospice’s Living Well Centre, marked the beginning of what is expected to be a vibrant and melodic journey. The choir is a testament to the hospice’s commitment to fostering wellbeing and community connections, extending an open invitation to all, regardless of musical prowess or experience.

Virginia lawmakers push richer employer-provided benefits to worker

The Center Square, by Morgan Sweeney; 1/30/24

Calling her state and America behind “the entire industrialized world,” a Virginia senator is one of two lawmakers pushing legislation to implement an employer-provided benefit to workers. ... The program would guarantee that employees taking time off for the birth of a child or “an illness, injury, impairment ... or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider” would continue to receive 80% of their paycheck for up to 12 weeks of leave.

Caregivers: Being a 'care partner' for someone is not a burden

Parkinson's News Today, by Marisa Wexler, MS; 1/30/24

Focusing on 'burden' reduces care partner support to 'burden reduction.' ... "A singular focus on 'caregiver burden' and a lack of knowledge of care partners' perceptions of [Parkinson's] caregiving can limit care partner support to only burden reduction, which may not always be possible given the progressive nature of the disease," wrote the scientists, who interviewed 16 caregivers to better understand their perspectives.

Today's Encouragement

**I had no idea that history was being made. I was just tired of giving up. -
Rosa Parks**

Editor's Note: Hospice & Palliative Care Today honors Black History Month through our "Today's Encouragement" posts for February.

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