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Hospice Provider News

Alzheimer's: Watch for signs it's time to start hospice care

The Advocate, by Dana Territo; 2/5/24

When is someone with dementia ready for hospice care? ... Some of the characteristics the affected individual may be exhibiting include the lack of ability to ambulate without assistance, incontinence of bowel and bladder, inability to dress and bathe properly, and speech limited to approximately a half dozen or fewer intelligible and different words. There are also intercurrent illnesses associated with advanced dementia in which hospice services would be a benefit.

Palliative Care Provider News

AAHPM Annual Presidential Citations

AAHPM; 2/7/24

American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) announced their three Presidential Citations of 2024 to be presented at Annual Assembly taking place from March 23-25 in Phoenix, Arizona.

1. The Carter Family
2. Hospice Medical Director Certification Board (HMDCB)
3. International Association of Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC)

Editor's Note: For descriptions, click on the title's link and scroll to the bottom of AAHPM's Awards' page.

Joint inpatient palliative care approaches may reduce length of stay in intensive care units

Physician's Weekly; 2/7/24

Patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) would benefit from having an Inpatient Palliative Care (IPC) team to help them through this difficult chapter in their lives. An IPC team usually help patients manage their symptoms and pain along with providing support to them and their families and assisting with communication to ensure realistic expectations.



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Clinical News

How PBM legislation would transform the industry

Modern Healthcare, by Lauren Berryman; 1/24/24

The pharmacy benefit manager industry could look a lot different soon if Congress follows through with bipartisan efforts to pass bills governing the sector. PBMs such as CVS Caremark, Express Scripts and OptumRx would face new transparency requirements that would give health insurance companies, employers, customers and regulators new insights into how they negotiate prices for prescription medicines—and how much of the savings they generate find their way to patients and plan sponsors. Pending legislation also would prohibit lucrative practices such as spread pricing.

Regulatory News

CMS seeks input on Medicare Advantage transparency policy

Modern Healthcare, by Alison Bennett; 1/25/24

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services wants public input to guide possible future regulations to mandate greater transparency from Medicare Advantage plans, according to a request for information issued Thursday. The agency has sought to shed more light on Medicare Advantage operations and finances in recent years and required insurers to reveal information in areas such as medical loss ratio calculations, prior authorization processes, supplemental benefits and health equity.

Medicare Advantage plans face new rate cut under CMS proposal

Modern Healthcare, by Nona Tepper; 1/31/24

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is calling for another reduction in the Medicare Advantage base payment rate, which could further challenge health insurers struggling with rising costs. Under a proposed rule issued Wednesday, the Medicare Advantage benchmark would be 0.16% less in calendar 2025 than under current policy, excluding risk adjustment, and would mark a second consecutive year of a lower benchmark rate. The agency plans to finalize the rule by April 1.



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Public Policy News

Real aid in dying means caring for the dying, not helping them to die - Opinion

Newsweek, by F. Matthew Eppinette; 1/31/24

... [Medical aid in dying is legal] in 10 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. As state legislatures convene for 2024, 18 states have had assisted-suicide-enabling legislation introduced, or have it pending from last year, when such legislation was introduced in 15 states. Arguments will be made that the prospect of pain at

the end of life means assisted suicide should be legal. It is worth asking, however, whether legalizing assisted suicide is wise public policy. I submit that it is not, and here are four reasons why.

Publisher's note: Author is Executive Director of The Center for Bioethics & Human Dignity; includes CAPC study reference aimed to increase palliative care.

Bill that would legalize medically assisted suicide debated at Minnesota Capitol

CBS News, by Jonah Kaplan; 1/25/24

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A bill that would legalize assisted suicide in Minnesota may have the momentum to pass this upcoming session. The bill was heard and debated on Thursday by the health committee, and it would make the assisted suicide option available only for patients 18 and over who are terminally ill with a prognosis of six months to live or less. The patient must also be mentally fit.

Las Vegas conference examines the impact of 'right to die' laws

Mountain West News Bureau, by Yvette Fernandez; 2/5/24

A University of Nevada Las Vegas conference [discussed] "lessons learned" from U.S. states and other countries that allow medical aid in dying. Dr. David Orentlicher is head of the UNLV Health Law Program, which held the conference on Feb. 1 and 2. He said so-called "right to die" laws in the United States have very strict requirements. ... Only 10 states and the District of Columbia allow for medical aid in dying. ... As a Nevada legislator, Orentlicher was one of the co-sponsors of the "Death with Dignity" bill, SB 239, ... said the option of having a physician present could improve state laws.



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Mergers & Aquisition News

Hospice of Western Reserve plans to merge with Hospice of North Central Ohio

Crain's Cleveland Business, by Paige Bennett; 2/6/24

Hospice of the Western Reserve, a provider of palliative and end-of-life care, caregiver support and bereavement services and one of Cleveland's largest nonprofits, intends to merge with the Hospice of North Central Ohio.

Centrica Care Navigators affiliates with NorthStar Care Community

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 2/5/24

Michigan-based Centrica Care Navigators has affiliated with the NorthStar Care Community, which also operates Hospice of Michigan and Arbor Hospice. ... Post-transaction, the combined nonprofit organization will care for more than 1,800 hospice patients across 60 Michigan counties, as well as nearly 900 palliative care patients, making it one of the largest nonprofit operators in the United States, according to Kelly McCormick, CEO of Centrica.

Post-Acute Care News

Arizona legislators call for more transparency, improved safety in assisted living

McKnight's Senior Living, by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 1/30/24

Arizona has joined a growing list of states where governments are calling for

more transparency from assisted living communities through legislation following local media reports questioning resident safety in the setting.



TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

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Assisted Living Report Card allows consumers to compare communities based on reviews, inspections

McKnight's Senior Living, by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 1/30/24

A new Assisted Living Report Card launched Monday in Minnesota, allowing consumers to compare assisted living communities based on resident and family reviews, along with state inspection ratings. In 2019, the state legislature provided funding to develop the report card and contracted with the University of Minnesota School of Public Health to complete a national review of quality measurements in assisted living.

[Home Health] Agencies score high on professionalism, lower on patients' likelihood to recommend to others: CAHPS report

McKnight's Home Care, by Adam Healy; 1/30/24

Home health agencies across the U.S. were graded highly on their professionalism, but many patients have indicated they might not be likely to recommend their services to others, according to the Home Health Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems program's most recent report. A total of 998,092 HHCAPHS surveys spanning more than 7,000 agencies were completed between July 2022 and June 2023, according to the report released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

The doctor will see you ... when? Regs, reimbursement delay SNF patient access

McKnight's Long-Term Care News, by Kimberly Marselas; 1/31/24

Patients seen by a physician or other advanced practice provider within a day of

a skilled nursing admission were less likely to be rehospitalized compared to patients seen two days post-admission or later. But various obstacles tend to push those physician visits well beyond the first few days of care, University of Pennsylvania researchers found.

FTC sues to block proposed CHS-Novant hospital sale

Modern Healthcare, by Alex Kacik; 1/25/24

The Federal Trade Commission on Thursday sued to block Novant Health's planned \$320 million acquisition of two North Carolina hospitals from Community Health Systems, alleging the deal could increase costs and reduce care quality. In February, CHS and Novant signed a definitive acquisition agreement involving Lake Norman Regional Medical Center in Mooresville and Davis Regional Medical Center in Statesville, which is transitioning from an acute-care hospital to an inpatient behavioral health facility.

CVS Health, academic medical center form ACO

Modern Healthcare, by Lauren Berryman; 1/25/24

CVS Health and the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center are partnering on an accountable care organization, they announced Thursday.

General News

AHRQ Stats: Largest Declines in Life Expectancy

AHRQ News Now; 2/6/24

Between 2019 and 2021, the average life expectancy for non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people declined by 9.2 percent, the most among any group. Average life expectancy declined by 5.3 percent for Black people, 5.1 percent for Hispanic people, 3 percent for White people, and 2.5 percent for Asian people. (Source: [2023 AHRQ National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report](#).)

Healthcare bankruptcies in 2023 hit highest level in 5 years

Modern Healthcare, by Caroline Hudson; 1/25/24

Healthcare company bankruptcies soared in 2023 to their highest level in the last five years, according to a report released Thursday by Gibbins Advisors. The advisory firm's report, which looked at Chapter 11 bankruptcy case filings from 2019 to 2023, found 79 healthcare companies with more than \$10 million in

liabilities filed for bankruptcy protection last year. Pharmaceutical and senior care companies made up nearly half of the list. The next-highest year for bankruptcies was 2019, when 51 companies filed for protection.

CalOptima to cancel contract with OC hospitals that serve homeless and low-income patients

The Orange County Register, by Scott Schwebke; 2/2/24

They stood shoulder to shoulder under a canopy of menacing clouds united in a mission to block CalOptima Health, the health insurer of Orange County's poorest residents, from severing ties with four "safety net" hospitals deemed to be under-utilized but beloved by patients and staff.

Former Trump health official to oversee Oracle Health

Modern Healthcare, by Brock E. W. Turner; 2/1/24

Seema Verma, former administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, is expanding her role at tech giant Oracle. Verma, who was CMS administrator under President Donald Trump, will serve as executive and general manager of Oracle Health.

Staying Competitive With Consumerism in Healthcare

MedCity News, by Mike Szczesny; 2/2/24

Adapting to healthcare consumerism is vital for providers to stay competitive. Shifting from traditional roles to informed consumers requires embracing transparency, technology, and personalized care.

100 Most influential people in healthcare - 2023

Modern Healthcare; 1/23/24

The 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare awards & recognition program honors individuals in healthcare who are deemed by their peers and the senior editors of Modern Healthcare to be the most influential individuals in the industry, in terms of leadership and impact.

Joint Commission CEO talks about new sustainability program for hospitals

Chief Healthcare Executive, by Ron Southwick; 2/5/24

[The Joint Commission,] which accredits thousands of healthcare organizations on a variety of health and safety issues, has just launched a voluntary certification program on sustainability. [Dr. Jonathan] Perlin, [president and

CEO], says he has heard from clinicians who pushed for a program to help hospitals do better on environmental issues. ... Undoubtedly, hospitals and health systems must improve their sustainability efforts. Each day, a hospital produces a ton of waste per every 100 beds, Perlin says.

Today's Encouragement

Time moves slowly but passes quickly. – Alice Walker

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

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