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Headlines

Top news stories of the month January 2024

TCN Talks Podcast, with Chris Comeaux, Mark Cohen; 2/6/24

Publisher's note: A summary of Hospice & Palliative Care Today's top news stories in January.

'Be a game-changer': Insights on leadership for Black History Month

Becker's Hospital Review, by Kelly Gooch; 2/8/24

In honor of Black History Month in February, *Becker's Hospital Review* asked what it means to be a Black leader in healthcare. Here, Black healthcare leaders share how their heritage and culture infuses their leadership philosophies and adds purpose to their roles.

Editor's Note: Features insights from the following leaders

- Pamela Abner. Vice President and Chief Diversity Operations Officer of Mount Sinai Health System (NY)
- Gina Calder. President of BJC HealthCare Hospitals in St. Charles County, Mo
- Al Campbell, RN. President of Winchester (MA) Hospital
- Mary Chatman, PhD, RN. Executive Vice President of Acute Care Operations for Wellstar Health System (GA)

- Thea James, MD. Vice President of Mission and Associate Chief Medical Officer at Boston Medical Center (MA)
- Geralda Xavier, MD. Chief Medical Officer of Atlantic Health System's Newton and Hackettstown Medical Centers (NJ)

Hospice Provider News

Quality, culture are watchwords for hospices in 2024

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 2/9/24

Amid intensified regulatory scrutiny, staffing headwinds and shifts towards value-based care, hospices need to ensure that they've made a strong commitment to quality and to foster a positive workplace culture, according to hospice leaders.

Notable mentions: Adnrew Molosky, Chapters Health; Craig Dresang, Yolo Care's.



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VNHS leveraging tech to optimize hospice patient experience: A game-changer in end-of-life care

CompsMag, by Tech Desk; 2/8/24

... Georgia-based hospice provider Visiting Nurse Health System (VNHS) ... has been a pioneer in implementing various technologies that are becoming increasingly common in the post-acute space. For example, VNHS implemented its remote patient monitoring program in 2007 and more recently delved into predictive analytics. According to VNHS CEO Dorothy Davis, they have invested for five years in a platform that has become the repository for claims data coming in.

Big Bend Hospice Inpatient Unit opens at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, increases access to quality end-of-life care

Business Wire; 2/8/24

Big Bend Hospice, in partnership with Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH), proudly announces the opening of the First Commerce Center for Compassionate Care (FCCCC), a new inpatient hospice unit on the third floor of Tallahassee Memorial Hospital.

PeaceHealth hospice and home care nurses near Eugene set to begin strike over the weekend

KLCC Oregon Public Broadcasting, by Rolando Hernandez; 2/8/24

After almost a year of negotiations, nurses with PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Home Care Services are going on strike. More than 90 nurses with the Oregon Nurses Association will be striking for two weeks starting Feb. 10. These nurses provide hospice care and other services to patients in the Eugene area.



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Palliative Care Provider News

Rutgers, Samaritan forge critical partnership in palliative care education

Palliative Care News, by Robert Holly; 2/9/24

The [Rutgers University-Camden and Samaritan] partnership is reflective of similar palliative care-awareness efforts happening across the U.S. The Rutgers-Samaritan collaboration, in particular, is focused on bolstering clinical rotations and hands-on training opportunities for Rutgers-Camden students in nursing, social work and psychology.

Notable mentions: Antonio D. Tillis, Rutgers University-Camden; Phillip W. Heath, Samaritan (NJ).

Clinical News

Race, ethnicity, and cancer type influence which patients access hospice care

Oncology Nurse Advisor, by Jennifer Larson; 2/5/24

The analysis also showed disparities in hospice use by race and ethnicity. For

example, patients who were Asian, Black, or Hispanic were less likely than White patients to use hospice services, as were patients from those minority groups who spoke English as a second language. Members of minority groups were also more likely to unenroll from hospice care.

Where things stand: a summary of pending federal cannabis legislation

Reuters, Jean E. Smith-Gonnell and Cole White; 2/8/24

Federal legislation pertaining to cannabis reform, once a political oddity, now commands significant resources and attention in Congress. With numerous bills under consideration, the landscape is both dynamic and complex. ... In this overview, we aim to provide clarity amidst the legislative maze and get to the root of the most significant cannabis legislation introduced in 2023.



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4 recent advancements in Alzheimer's disease care

Becker's Hospital Review, by Ashleigh Hollowell; 2/6/24

Alzheimer's disease research in the last year has expanded, promising clinicians in the field and patients experiencing the condition more accurate detection tests, new treatment possibilities and research to fuel further advancements in care. ... For four of the most recent updates in care and detention, [click on the title's link, above].

Exploring the relationship between hospice care and end-of-life doulas

Phaneuf Funeral Homes & Crematorium; 2/7/24

Highlighting the collaborative nature of this relationship, [Lee] Webster pointed

out, “Doulas are not out to steal [healthcare professionals’] jobs, but are another set of tools in the tool chest.” The supportive role of doulas can enhance the comprehensive care provided by hospice teams. “People everywhere involved with the doula movement are struggling with this [integration],” Webster added.

Regulatory News

California Hospice Network: State falls short in curbing potential malfeasance

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 2/8/24

The continued licensing of new hospices in California despite a moratorium is “deeply disturbing and frustrating,” the California Hospice Network (CHN) indicated in a statement. The practice is undermining efforts to combat hospice fraud, which has been rampant in California according to media and state government investigations. In 2021, the state enacted two hospice reform laws — Senate Bill 664 and Assembly Bill 1280 — designed to strengthen oversight, including a moratorium on new licenses and an extensive audit of California’s licensing and oversight processes.



CMS proposes to increase accrediting organization oversight

Modern Healthcare, by Mari Devereaux; 2/9/24

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services proposed Thursday to crack down on accrediting organizations following concerns of biased, inconsistent survey results and conflicts of interest. The proposed rule would strengthen CMS’ oversight of accrediting bodies and mandate the organizations reduce conflicts of interest with healthcare facilities, including by limiting fee-based consulting services. The proposal also would standardize accrediting organizations’ survey processes.

Molina joins chorus reporting Medicare Advantage challenges

Modern Healthcare, by Nona Tepper; 2/8/24

Molina Healthcare missed its profitability target for Medicare Advantage last year because medical costs spiked...

Public Policy News

5 recent MAID articles

1. **Over 70% of New Yorkers favor Medical Aid in Dying bill, new poll finds**

City & State New York, by Rebecca C. Lewis; 2/8/24

A new poll commissioned by the groups Death With Dignity and the Completed Life Initiative found that a majority of New Yorkers – over 70% – favor legislation that would permit doctors to prescribe terminally ill patients medication to end their own lives.

2. **Patient protections are major concern at emotional hearing on medical aid-in-dying bill**

Maryland Matters, by Danielle J. Brown; 2/9/24

There have been prior attempts to pass aid-in-dying bills in Maryland, while 10 other states and Washington, D.C. have passed similar legislation.

Publisher's note: Discussion of Maryland's [SB 443](#) and [HB 403](#). Both bills are titled the "End-of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)."

3. **End of Life Act again proposed in Maryland, lawmakers believe it could pass this year**

WBALTV-11, by David Collins; 2/8/24

More than 100 people signed up Thursday to testify for and against Maryland's End of Life Option Act, which would legalize medical aid in dying. Lawmakers have tried for years to pass the legislation, but supporters believe the political climate has changed and this is the year it will pass.

4. **Should Illinois become 11th state to adopt 'right to die' legislation?**

Chicago Sun-Times, by Tina Sfondeles; 2/9/24

Illinois Senate Democrats are moving forward on legislation that would give

mentally capable patients who are terminally ill an option of ending their own lives.

5. **Should treatment for severe mental illness include medical assistance in dying?**

The Hill, by Anand Kumar, Sally Weinstein; 2/9/24

Canada is on the threshold of enacting a law that would make medical assistance in dying (MAiD) accessible to people whose only medical condition is mental illness. If this were to pass, Canada would be one of only a handful of countries to extend that process for patients with serious mental illness.

Post-Acute Care News

As PACE grows, here's what providers need to know about getting involved in the model

Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 2/6/24

During the pandemic, some senior care models succeeded, and some didn't. The Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) was one that did. In 2023, PACE enrollment exceeded 70,000 participants and has seen an over 40% growth in enrollment since 2019. ... But, in order for providers to become PACE partners or participants, they have to be as prepared as possible prior to the enrollment process.

Nursing home system faces foreclosure amid \$51M in unpaid debt

Becker's Hospital Review, by Mariah Taylor; 2/6/24

A Peoria, IL based nursing home and assisted living company has entered foreclosure proceedings after lenders alleged it owes \$51 million in unpaid debts, the *Peoria Journal Star* reported Feb. 5. Petersen Health Care, which owns 17 facilities, entered the foreclosure agreement with X-Caliber Funding and Capital Funding in two separate federal cases in January. Petersen alleges it was the victim of a ransomware attack in fall 2023 that took down its billing system at several facilities and "crippled" its finances.

Petersen Health Care in battle for \$50 million share of massive nursing home portfolio

McKnight's Long-Term Care News, by Josh Henreckson; 2/6/24

An operator of nearly 100 Midwest care facilities is now embroiled in a two-front

legal battle over more than \$50 million in loans. Two lenders say that Petersen Health Care has failed to make payments due at 17 nursing homes across Illinois, Iowa and Missouri and are seeking foreclosure. The Peoria, IL, company is among the largest care providers in the region, employing several thousand care workers at its facilities in suburban and rural Illinois.

Atlanta's health care system is strained by major hospital's closing, doctors and patients say

NBC News, by Bracey Harris and J.J. McCorvey; 2/7/24

At Emory University Hospital Midtown in downtown Atlanta, two mobile pods have been stationed outside the emergency room. Doctors have been called in during extra busy "surge" times, and an administrator described patients on stretchers lining the halls. ... Nearby, Grady Memorial Hospital is so packed that ambulance traffic is sometimes routed to facilities miles away. ... These are the aftershocks from the closing in 2022 of Atlanta Medical Center in a city that already struggled to meet demand for services and provide accessible care.

Technology / Innovations News

Healthcare data breaches set record in 2023

Becker's Health IT, by Giles Bruce; 2/7/24

Healthcare data breaches hit an all-time high in 2023 as cybersecurity concerns continue to plague the industry, *HIPAA Journal* reported. More than 133 million patient records were breached last year, more than double the number in 2022 (51.9 million), according to the publication's analysis of HHS data.

General News

Humana to close its Louisville headquarters

Becker's Payer Issues, by Rylee Wilson; 2/5/24

Humana will consolidate its Louisville, Ky., headquarters, exiting the 27-story tower that bears its name. The company decided to leave the building as the company evolved to offer more flexible workstyles, the company said in a statement shared with Becker's. Humana will exit the downtown Louisville location over the next 18 to 24 months...

Non-print News

The Nature of Suffering: BJ Miller and Naomi Saks

GeriPal Podcast, with Alex Smith, Eric Widera, BJ Miller, Naomi Saks; 2/8/24

Today we talk about suffering in the many forms we encounter in palliative care.

Today's Encouragement

In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute. — Thurgood Marshall

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

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