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HOSPICE &
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TODAY

March 13th, 2024

Certified Nurses Day is March 19, 2024: [Click here](#) for ideas from the American Nurses Association. Read the "[Cooperman Barnabas](#)" article below (in "Education") for a creative example.

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Announcements

Certified Nurses Day is March 19, 2024: Click [here](#) for ideas from the American Nurses Association. Read the "Cooperman Barnabas" article below (in "Education") for a creative example.

Headlines

Hospice provider experience underscores urgency of program integrity efforts: Findings reveal current audit process' shortcomings

HomeCare News; 3/12/24

Following a series of meetings with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

(CMS) and Members of Congress on efforts to improve and protect hospice program integrity, four national hospice organizations—LeadingAge, the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC), the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI)—released findings of a hospice provider survey that the organizations say underscores the urgency and need for CMS and Congress to act.

Areas of emphasis during these conversations included:

- The need for hospice audits to appropriately target bad actors and those with deficient quality indicators.
- A request for CMS to be more transparent regarding the outcomes of the audit adjudication process, including by making denial and appeals data available to providers and the public.
- Reemphasis on the importance of auditor training to ensure expertise on hospice specific issues, which are distinctly separate from those faced by hospitals or home health agencies.

NHPCO and We Honor Veterans welcome CMS clarification regarding Medicare Hospice Benefit for dually eligible veterans

NHPCO Press Release; 3/11/24

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and its We Honor Veterans (WHV) program responded to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) clarification on concurrent care eligibility for Veteran beneficiaries. Under Change Request 13523 issued by CMS on February 22, 2024, the Medicare Benefit Manual is updated to clarify that a Veteran beneficiary who elects hospice services under the Medicare benefit may still receive services that are not included on the hospice plan of care and are furnished and paid under the beneficiary's Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, in addition to hospice services.



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Hospice Provider News

Spiritual care key to addressing disparities among underserved black communities

Hospice News, by Holly Vossel; 3/11/24

Spiritual hospice care providers are an important link to building bridges of access and trust among underserved African American populations. ... Having a historical context of understanding around the faith-based barriers among African American populations is a significant part of improving utilization, according to Wayman Scott, associate director of diversity, equity, inclusion and community relations at Maryland-based Gilchrist. Scott also has a background in hospice chaplaincy and serves as chair of the diversity committee at the Hospice & Palliative Network of Maryland.

What deathbed visions teach us about living

DNYUZ; 3/12/24

Chris Kerr was 12 when he first observed a deathbed vision. His memory of that summer in 1974 is blurred, but not the sense of mystery he felt at the bedside of his dying father. ... It would be more than 40 years before Kerr felt compelled to speak about that evening in the hospital room. He had followed his father, and three generations before him, into medicine and was working at Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo, where he was the chief medical officer and conducted research on end-of-life visions.

Oncology hospitalists improve hospice transitions for patients with advanced cancers

Yale School of Medicine, by Osman Moneer; 3/11/24

Unplanned hospitalizations for patients with advanced cancer often trigger discussions about care goals and transitions to hospice. Late referrals to hospice, particularly near the end of life, have been associated with reduced quality of life and increased healthcare costs. A new research study published in *Cancer* investigates the impact of oncology hospitalists on the timing of hospice transitions for patients with advanced cancers.



Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today

Hospice of the Valley offering services in Tucson

Tucson.com, by Debbie Shumway, Executive Director of Hospice of the Valley; 3/4/24

We are honored to share that Hospice of the Valley is now serving patients and families in Tucson. Our nonprofit agency was founded by a group of volunteers in 1977 and our mission has never wavered: Bringing comfort, dignity and compassionate care to our community.

Palliative Care Provider News

Palliative care cuts costs for metastatic cancer

Cancer Therapy Advisor, by Leah Lawrence; 3/12/24

Providing [palliative care](#) to inpatients with metastatic cancer can significantly reduce hospital costs and charges billed to insurance, according to research published in JCO Oncology Practice. Researchers found that inpatient palliative care was associated with reductions in charges and costs, regardless of a patient's age or whether they received aggressive interventions.

Telehealth preferences among patients with advanced cancer in the post COVID-19 vaccine era

Journal of Pain and Symptom Management; by Kawoswi K Shih, MD; Adrienne B Arechiga; Xi Chen PhD; Diana L. Urbauer, MS; Aline Rozman De Moraes, MD; Ashley J Rodriquez; Lisa Thomas; Penny A Stanton; Eduardo Bruera, MD; and David Hui MD; 3/10/24

Background: Few studies have examined patient preferences for telehealth in palliative care after the availability of COVID-19 vaccines. We examined patient preferences for video versus in-person visits and factors contributing to preferences in the post-vaccine era.

Conclusion: Patients expressed strong preference for video over in-person visits in the outpatient palliative care setting.



Clinical News

In the ICU, what is a good death? Understanding why clinicians and patients' families may disagree in Intensive Care Unit

Northwestern Now, by Marla Paul; 3/7/24

What is a good death for a patient in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)? The answer to that question may depend on whether you ask a family member of a patient or the physician, who are not necessarily aligned. ... Approximately 20-30% of people who die in the U.S., die in the ICU, according to previous research. Nearly 60% of ICU admissions result in death. Wide discrepancies have been documented between a patient's stated preferences and the end-of-life care actually delivered.

Facing dementia: clarifying end-of-life choices, supporting better lives

EurekaAlert!, by The Hastings Center; 3/11/24

A new Hastings Center special report considers how America's aging society responds to the needs and concerns of people facing dementia.

... Three essays reconsider familiar ways of thinking and talking about decision-making and care concerning people nearing the end of life to better reflect the needs and concerns of people facing dementia. For example, "Too Soon or Too Late: Rethinking the Significance of Six Months When Dementia Is a Primary Diagnosis" takes a critical look at the "six-month rule."

ACC updates HFrEF Decision Pathway, reinforcing the Four Pillars of Therapy

tctMD, by Todd Neale; 3/11/24

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) has updated its expert consensus decision pathway for the treatment of patients who have heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF), providing updates on medication choice and underscoring the importance of the four pillars of guideline-directed medical therapy (GDMT). ... Like the 2021 version, the new pathway provides advice around [topics listed] ... and the integration of palliative care and the transition to hospice care.



Is extending life by weeks worth the toll some cancer drugs take? Doctors push for 'common-sense oncology'

CBC News, by Amina Zafar and Christine Birak; 3/11/24

People may celebrate a 2-week improvement in survival without acknowledging costs. When a treatment buys a few weeks or months but comes with with a lot of side-effects, then the perspectives of people with cancer may differ, says Dr. Christopher Booth. ... The goal of what they call "common-sense oncology" is to prioritize treatments that meaningfully improve survival and quality of life. They aim to address what they see as problems in the field, such as a lack of critical thinking in oncology training, falling standards for drug approvals and avoidance of end-of-life discussions.

New book addresses prolonged grief disorder diagnosis and treatment

Hospice Foundation of America, press release 2/26/24

Hospice Foundation of America (HFA) today announced the publication of Understanding Prolonged Grief Disorder, written and edited by some of the nation's leading grief experts and healthcare professionals. Prolonged grief disorder (PGD) is a new diagnosis in the most recent version of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders (5th ed., text rev.) Inclusion of PGD validates the occurrence of a disorder characterized by the persistence of pervasive, intense grief. With the possible exception of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), this is the first time a loss-related condition has been identified as a diagnosable condition.

Regulatory News

Healthcare technology regulatory update - March 2024

JD Supra, by Justin Chavez and Vimala Devassy; 3/8/24

Federal and state agencies are actively proposing and enacting health technology-related legislation and regulations.

- Trending telehealth topics include federal changes for prescribing opioid treatments, challenges presented by shifting state laws ...
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) updated guidance on permitted text messaging of orders, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) updated its Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Security Rule guidance, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) plans to conduct a HIPAA Audit Review Survey.
- States are introducing laws targeting the regulation of artificial intelligence (AI) in clinical decision-making.

Whistleblower cases on the rise nationwide; Sarbanes-Oxley, Dodd-Frank laws open door for more to speak out

PressReader, Herald-Tribune; by Esteban Parra and Xerxes Wilson; 3/10/24

A former medical director specializing in neurosurgery at southern Delaware's largest health care provider claims in a lawsuit that Bayhealth Medical Center misclassified "brain-dead" patients in order to overbill for services.

Public Policy News

Aid in dying or physician-assisted suicide? As Minn. lawmakers weigh bill, advocates and opponents choose different terms

ArcaMax / Pioneer Press, by Alex Derosier; 3/10/24

... "Medical aid in dying" or "physician-assisted suicide" is an emotional issue for many, with a January [Minnesota] House hearing on the bill drawing an audience

of hundreds on either side. Lawmakers heard hours of testimony from cancer patients with only months to live, and families of people who suffered painful deaths from disease. There also were people concerned legal elective death could eventually become an option for people with disabilities and negatively affect care. But it isn't just a debate on medical ethics. There's also an ongoing discussion in medicine, academia, journalism and law over what society should call the practice.

NH End of Life Act to allow medical aid in dying moves closer to passage

Gannett / Aol., by Margie Cullen, Portsmouth Herald; 3/8/24

The End of Life Options Act, which would allow terminally ill people in New Hampshire to choose to receive medical aid in dying, gained its first victory in the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday. Both Republicans and Democrats voted in favor of House Bill 1283, sending it to the full House of Representatives with a recommendation to pass, 13-7.

Post-Acute Care News

Costs of long-term care: 'Financial ruin is baked into the system'

KFF Health News, by Jordan Rau and Reed Abelson; 3/9/24

Thousands of readers reacted to the articles in the "Dying Broke" series about the financial burden of long-term care in the United States. They offered their assessments for the government and market failures that have drained the lifetime savings of so many American families. And some offered possible solutions. In more than 4,200 comments, readers shared their struggles in caring for spouses, older parents, and grandparents. They expressed anxieties about getting older themselves and needing help to stay at home or in institutions like nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

Navigating Aging: Does our society simply not care about our vulnerable older population?

KFF Health News, by Judith Graham; 3/10/24

... The pandemic made things worse. Prejudice against older adults is nothing new, but "it feels more intense, more hostile" now than previously, said Karl Pillemer, 69, a professor of psychology and gerontology at Cornell University. "I think the pandemic helped reinforce images of older people as sick, frail, and isolated — as people who aren't like the rest of us," he said. "And human nature

being what it is, we tend to like people who are similar to us and be less well disposed to 'the others.'"

General News

Paintings by famous artists reimagined in exhibition showcasing end-of-life care

Largs&Millport, by PA News Agency; 3/11/24

Marie Curie [Hospice in the United Kingdom] has commissioned artist Lisa Buchanan ... to create the series of works to be auctioned its Great Daffodil Appeal. [This collection depicts the hospice's] nursing team, providing care and support to the dying and those close to them. [These are described as "reimagined masterpieces" and include the following:]

- A reimagining of a painting by The Scream artist Edvard Munch, called The Dead Mother and Child. In the new painting a Marie Curie healthcare assistant is seen caring for a patient in bed while a nurse comforts a child.
- ...
- A version of Munch's By The Death Bed, which now depicts a senior nurse providing emotional support to family and friends. ...
- The Death Of Gericault by Ary Scheffer, which shows the death of French painter Theodore Gericault, has been reimagined as a nurse making a patient comfortable in their dying hours.

Education

Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center recognizes Certified Nurses Day

RWJ Barnabas Health Blog; 3/11/24

In honor of Certified Nurses Day, March 19, 2024, Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center (CBMC) acknowledges the 500 members of our Magnet-recognized nursing staff who have achieved and maintained national board certification during 2023 in their nursing specialty.

Editor's Note: Congratulations to these certified nurses and to Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center for honoring them in such visible, meaningful way! For your organization, though time is short, what can you do to honor your certified nurses?

Today's Encouragement

A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows. - Francis of Assisi

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