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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

March 15th, 2024

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Editor Picks

Poem: I knew you had been sick for quite a while. I had no idea you were walking your last mile.

The Andalusia Star News, by Vickie C. Wacaster, "a patient and hospice advocate for Aveanna Hospice"; 3/14/24. This poem is at the end of an article, "COLUMN: Hospice helps make most of all moments."

I knew you had been sick for quite a while.
I had no idea you were walking your last mile.
Had I known your time was so near,
Despite my fear,
I would have talked more, touched more, and loved more.
I asked about your care, your prognosis, your life,
Why couldn't they tell me? I was your wife.
Or was I in denial? Did someone try to tell me?
Did I refuse to hear? Could I not see?
Did I refuse to accept?
Your diagnosis and prognosis, did I reject?

Was it because of unbelief?
That death snatched you as a thief.
We could have made the most of the time you had left,
If only we had not been afraid of what we felt.

Vickie “Cunningham” Wacaster 2002; now a patient and hospice advocate for Aveanna Hospice

Hospice Provider News

A fond farewell: Musings on the end of the Medicare Advantage Hospice Carve-In Demonstration

Husch Blackwell, podcast with Meg Pekarske and Chris Comeaux; 3/14/24

It came as a surprise to our team when we learned that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) was ending the hospice component of Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) on December 31, 2024. Upon learning this, Husch Blackwell’s Meg Pekarske contacted Chris Comeaux, the president and CEO of Teleios Collaborative Network, to see if he wanted to share his thoughts on this unexpected turn of events and what may be on the horizon. This is a forward-looking conversation where we explore how the lessons learned can galvanize new advocacy on the best ways to care for patients with advanced illnesses.

Medicaid Fraud Control Units Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General; 3/14/2024

Medicaid Fraud Control Units (MFCUs or Units) investigate and prosecute Medicaid provider fraud and patient abuse or neglect. [This 32 page, downloadable document includes:]

- Background
- Case Outcomes
- MCO Fraud Referrals Received by Units
- Conclusion
- Appendices
- Acknowledgments and Contact
- About the Office of Inspector General

- Endnotes



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Accelerate Growth
Accelerate Learning

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California Leads the State-Level Battle Against Hospice Fraud

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 3/13/24

As hospice program integrity remains in the spotlight, California remains the only state to take action on curbing the problem. Beginning in 2021, numerous reports emerged of unethical or illegal practices among hundreds of newly licensed hospices, particularly among new companies popping up in California, Texas, Nevada and Arizona. California's Department of Justice (CDOJ) in 2021 issued a [report](#) detailing the state's history of lax oversight.

Notable mentions: Sheila Clark, California Hospice & Palliative Care Association.

Radiothon raises over \$32,000 for Quiet Oaks Hospice House

WJON Radio News; 3/14/24

The St. Cloud radiothon held on Tuesday was a huge success for a local nonprofit... The radiothon is the kickoff to the fundraising campaign for Quiet Oaks Hospice House.

Palliative Care Provider News

Palliative Care integration on the rise

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 3/13/24

A range of medical specialties are incorporating palliative care principles into their care models. The trend points to ways that patients might receive palliative services through new avenues, such as geriatrics, primary care or home health care.

Clinical News

What are ageing and death from a biological point of view?

Polytechnique insights, by Alexis Gautreau and Clemence Guillermain; 3/12/24

Linking philosophy and biology may seem strange. Yet there are many subjects where the two disciplines come into play and are, in turn, essential to understanding them. Death is a perfect example. This biological reality remains an abstract concept until we experience it in our own lives. But, however abstract it may be, death is based on a biological reality.

In the resuscitation discussion, do words matter between doctors and patients?

Rutgers, by Patti Zielinski; 3/12/24

Rutgers Health researchers seek to reduce barriers to physicians having code status conversations with older adults. ... The [study](#), published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, sought to determine the best language doctors could use when discussing a patient's code status to reduce the barrier to having these conversations. It found that it takes less than five minutes on average for doctors to have discussions going over what CPR is, what a patient's preference might be and making a decision that patients felt comfortable with regarding whether they want to be resuscitated, according to the study.

Editor's Note: Click on the title above for the summary description; [click here for the detailed research article, "Aligning patient values and code status: Choice of Diction's Effect \(CODE\) study](#).

Doctor with terminal cancer shares the three things everyone should consider doing to prepare for death

Your Tango, by Alexandra Blogier; 3/12/24

Kim is a resident doctor who was diagnosed with metastatic sarcoma when she was 28 years old. She invites people to see what her life is like, as both a medical resident and a cancer patient, focusing on the practice of gratitude and being

present. ... Kim revealed the three most important things she's done as a cancer patient to get the administrative side of her affairs in order, which she recommends everyone do, even if they're not sick.

1. Visit an estate lawyer and write a will
2. Make a record of all bank accounts, debts, and assets
3. Have open and honest discussions with loved ones about end-of-life care



Responding to Soul Injury: Tools for hope and healing

Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing; by Deborah Grassman, Abi Katz, Luann Conforti-Brown, Josephine F Wilson, Angie Snyder; 3/13/24

Soul Injury is defined as a wound that separates a person from their real self, caused by unmourned loss and hurt, unforgiven guilt and shame, and fear of helplessness or loss of control. Tools and interventions have been developed to guide people impacted by Soul Injury. This study assessed the effectiveness of 12 tools and interventions, ... The Anchor Your Heart tool was the most frequently used tool and had the most enduring utilization across time and settings.

Editor's Note: [Click here for The Anchor Your Heart Tool](#) identified in this article. Share this research and article with your clinical teams and bereavement counselors.

Palliative and end-of-life care in hematologic malignancies: Progress and opportunities

JCO Oncology Practice, by Mazie Tsang, MD, MAS, MS and Thomas W. LeBlanc, MD, MA, MHS, FAAHPM, FASC; 3/13/24

... An important finding from this study was the qualitative data from narratives of volunteer caregivers and hospice staff that described daily patient care, changes in patient status, perceived symptom burden, and indications for medication administration. The authors identified skin integrity concerns,

bleeding, pathologic fractures, and delirium as unique issues for patients with hematologic malignancies enrolled on hospice. ... These findings provide further evidence that hospice care can and does work well for some patients with hematologic malignancies.

Heart failure staging and indications for advanced therapies in adults with Congenital Heart Disease

Heart Failure Clinics / Elsevier, by Alexander C Egbe and Heidi M Connolly; pre-publish 4/24 via online

Summary: Heart Failure (HF) is common in adults with Congenital Heart Disease (CHD), United States, and it is the leading cause of death in this population. Adults with CHD presenting with stage D HF have a poor prognosis, and early recognition of signs of advanced HF, and referral for advanced therapies for HF offer the best survival as compared with other therapies. The indications for advanced therapies for HF outlined in this article should serve as a guide for clinicians to determine the optimal time for referral. Palliative care should be part of the multidisciplinary care model for HF in patients with CHD.



[Eleventh-Hour Program] Volunteers provide companionship to patients reaching the end of life

Charleston Area Medical Center, Vandalia Health; 3/13/24

Established in April 2023, the Eleventh-Hour Program was designed to ensure no patient passes alone in the hospital. The first Eleventh Hour vigil was held on Easter Sunday in 2023. Since then, the companions have participated in 14 vigils in six nursing units at CAMC Memorial and General hospitals.

A death doula keeps legacies alive in rural Oregon

Jefferson Public Radio, by Justin Higginbottom; 3/13/24 print and audio

Rudd is an end-of-life doula, sometimes called a death doula, specializing in rural care. In that role she provides non-medical support to those in their last stage of life. ... She helps with practical things like funeral arrangements, helping someone donate their body, or planning for what happens to their property after death. She's been helping one 83-year-old client with that recently.

Public Policy News

Healthcare provider anti-burnout bill advances in Congress

Modern Healthcare, by Michael Mcauliff; 3/12/24

A bill to support healthcare workers struggling with **burnout**, stress and other work-related mental health problems advanced in Congress on a unanimous subcommittee vote Tuesday. ... The measure funds grants for healthcare organizations and professionals associations to offer employee education programs to address burnout, encourage peer support, and direct struggling providers to mental and behavioral health treatment.

Mergers & Aquisition News

Private equity sets sights on home care, hospice, new report finds

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 3/14/24

The home care segment increasingly has become an attractive target for private equity buyers, particularly personal care and hospice, according to the Private Equity Stakeholder Project, a nonprofit financial watchdog organization.

Post-Acute Care News

How home care companies can optimize operations

McKnights Home Care, by Lance A. Slatton; 3/12/24

To meet the evolving needs of this growing industry without placing additional stress on employed caregivers, it's crucial that home care companies optimize their operations. This may involve streamlining their processes, adopting innovative technologies, and prioritizing efficiency to ensure high-quality care and sustainable growth.

Technology / Innovations News

Healthcare execs need to 'iterate faster' for success, says CIO

Becker's Health IT, by Laura Dyrda; 3/13/24

Baton Rouge, LA-based Franciscan Ministries of Our Lady (FMOL) Health System embarked on a journey last year to incorporate more artificial intelligence into its operational and clinical systems. Will Landry, senior vice president and CIO of the system, said while the organization doesn't want AI making decisions, there is a lot of value in supporting caregivers and team mates. He joined the "Becker's Healthcare Podcast" to share the health system's strategy for governance and his push for more innovative thinking around AI applications.

Google Cloud releases new clinical generative AI tools at HIMSS24

MedCity News, by Katie Adams; 3/12/24

At HIMSS, Google Cloud announced new AI features designed to assist providers, payers and any other healthcare organizations seeking to make better use of their clinical data.

Data breach affects more than 2,000 Texas hospital patients

Becker's Health IT, by Madeline Ashley; 3/13/24

Dallas-based UT Southwestern Medical Center has been [hit](#) with a data breach that is affecting 2,094 patients. ... The type of patient information breached includes addresses, medical information, health insurance, date of birth, and "other." "The incident involved internal use of unapproved software and did not involve a cyberattack or external exposure of data," a spokesperson for UT Southwestern Medical Center said. ... News of the data breach comes after the hospital was part of a MOVEit software data breach last July that affected millions of people across various industries.

General News

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan Implementation: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

LCW, California Public Agency Labor & Employment Bolg; 3/13/24

With the enactment of [California] Senate Bill ("SB") 553, the legislature amended Labor Code section 6401.7 and added Labor Code section 6401.9, requiring employers to adopt and implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

("WVPP") and corresponding training for their employees by July 1, 2024. ... Since the enactment of the bill, employers have had questions regarding the WVPP and the training requirements. Below are some common questions and the responses to them: ... [Click on the article's title to view]

Other News

Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 3/14/24 per [nasdaq.com](https://www.nasdaq.com)

- [Adus HomeCare \(ADUS: \\$98.05\)](#)
- [Amedisys \(AMED: \\$92.78\)](#)

- [BrightSpring Health \(BTSG: \\$8.23\)](#)
- [Encompass \(EHC: \\$75.11\)](#)
- [Enhabit \(EHAB: \\$10.84\)](#)
- [Ensign Group \(ENSG: \\$121.98\)](#)
- [HCA Healthcare \(HCA: \\$324.93\)](#)
- [Humana \(HUM: \\$349.06\)](#)
- [Pennant Group \(PNTG: \\$18.53\)](#)

- [Vitas / Chemed Corp \(CHE: \\$650.00\)](#)

Today's Encouragement

Beware the Ides of March ... ~ William Shakespeare

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