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March 22nd, 2024

[ANNOUNCEMENT: Explore Upcoming Conferences at Our Education Page](#)

Hospice & Palliative Care Today invites to examine our new Education page, listing national and state conferences relevant to our hospice and palliative care leaders. Ongoing, you can easily access and share this page from the "Education" tab on our website's menu: www.HospicePalliativeCareToday.com.

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Hospice Provider News

Planning for National Healthcare Decisions Day 2024: 8 ideas to spread the word

the conversation project; 3/12/24

Looking for ideas to plan and promote NHDD in your community? We've pulled together some ideas from the hundreds of local, state, and national groups across the country who have shared what they did last year or are planning for this April 16th. Be sure to take a peek at this roadmap to help you navigate all things NHDD, including where to find more examples. We hope the information ... will spark ideas and get you started.

Is cybersecurity spending too low to prevent another Change breach?

Modern Healthcare, by Brock E.W. Turner; 3/19/24

On Feb. 21, Change Healthcare, which processes 15 billion transactions a year, [suffered a ransomware attack](#) that has caused ripple effects throughout the healthcare system, hampering operations and finances for hospitals, physician offices, pharmacies, insurers and patients. Cybersecurity professionals are sounding the alarm on future attacks if healthcare organizations don't start putting more financial resources into protecting their data.

5 myths about dying that too many people believe

The Hearty Soul, by Maria Sykes; 3/21/24

Myth# 1: I should always stay positive for the sake of my loved one.

Myth #2: I should make sure my loved one eats, drinks, and sleeps as normal.

Myth #3: I need to prolong my loved one's life as much as possible.

Myth #4: It's important to limit the use of painkillers to keep my loved one healthy.

Myth #5: If I seek help to care for my loved one, I'm a failure.



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Amid tense negotiations, Oregon nurses allege patient neglect by PeaceHealth during strike

Eugene Register-Guard, by Miranda Cyr; 3/20/24

Tensions between PeaceHealth and Sacred Heart home health and hospice nurses persist, with the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) claiming last week that PeaceHealth neglected patients during the nurses' two-week strike in February. ... ONA has been negotiating a new contract with PeaceHealth for a full year. The last contract expired in April of 2023. Despite 40 negotiation meetings, no agreement has been reached, according to ONA.

Lawmakers threaten harsher penalties for negligent providers, CEOs in wake of crippling cyberattack

McKnights Home Care; by Adam Healy; 3/20/24

Roughly a month after Change Healthcare [fell victim](#) to a cyberattack that

debilitated a large section of the healthcare system, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Xavier Becerra, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, devised a plan to penalize providers that fail to protect their patients' data.

Palliative Care Provider News

Palliative care in the older adult with cancer and the role of the geriatrician: a narrative review

Annals of Palliative Medicine, by Bibban Bant Deol, Lisa Binns-Emerick, MOhammad Kang, Pragnesh Patel; 3/15/24 online ahead of print

Conclusions: Embedding primary care geriatrics in the palliative care arena helps to provide more access to this care. This integration helps providers address basic symptom management, advance care planning and work with individuals on goals of care to assure the care being provided is congruent individual's priorities. Older adults respond to symptoms different than their younger counterparts. Management of these symptoms has to be addressed in a manner commiserate with their age.



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Clinical News

\$4.25 million gene therapy for kids becomes world's priciest drug

NBC LEX18, by Alex Arger; 3/20/24

A lifesaving gene therapy for children born with a rare and debilitating disease has just been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The catch? Its wholesale cost has been set at \$4.25 million, making it the most expensive medicine in the world. Orchard Therapeutics announced the hefty price for Lenmeldy Wednesday, two days after the FDA approved the therapy as the only treatment for kids with metachromatic leukodystrophy, or MLD.

Regulatory News

Medicare Advantage health equity factor to shake up ratings

Modern Healthcare, by Nona Tepper; 3/20/24

A federal effort to promote health equity will redistribute billions of dollars in Medicare Advantage Star Ratings bonus payments among health insurance companies. Beginning in 2027, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will reward Medicare Advantage plans that demonstrate progress addressing health disparities. At the same time, the agency scrapped a bonus policy that benefited insurers that sustained high overall quality ratings over time.

New ACO model paves way for innovative home-based primary care services: CMS

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 3/20/24

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on Tuesday unveiled a new person-centered care payment model that expands how and where beneficiaries can receive primary care. "People whose primary care provider participates in the ACO PC Flex Model may get care in more convenient ways, like care based at home or through virtual means, extra help managing chronic diseases, and more preventive health services to keep them healthy," CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure said in a statement. "Not only will people with Medicare receive more coordinated, seamless care that addresses their unique needs, but CMS is supporting primary care clinicians and giving them more flexibility to provide person-centered care."



Maryland health officials have applied for new federal 'AHEAD model.' Here's what it means.

Maryland Matters, by Danielle J. Brown; 3/20/24

State health officials have placed their bid for Maryland to be among the first participants in a federal program that will help fund state initiatives to improve patient outcomes and bridge inequities, while constraining hospital and medical costs. The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is rolling out the new States Advancing All-Payer Health Equity Approaches and Development Model, called the AHEAD Model, and states are invited to apply for funding.

Public Policy News

Noem signs bill removing some medical marijuana dispensary protections

SDPB Radio (South Dakota Public Radio), by Evan Walton; 3/19/24

Gov. Kristi Noem has signed a bill removing some protections medical cannabis facilitates now receive. Senate Bill 71 allows local law enforcement to inspect, search, seize, prosecute, or impose disciplinary action on medical cannabis dispensaries. This includes medical cannabis cultivation, manufacturing, and testing facilities.

Mergers & Aquisition News

Private equity group Waud Capital Partners acquires Senior Helpers

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 3/21/24

Private equity firm Waud Capital Partners is acquiring Senior Helpers, a home care franchise company with nearly 400 locations in the United States, Canada and Australia, for an undisclosed amount, according to an announcement about the deal released Thursday. ... Advocate Health, which owns Senior Helpers, is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the US, according to a release. Senior Helpers provides wellness services such as meal planning, grocery shopping, medication management, transportation, companionship and assistance with activities of daily living.



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Post-Acute Care News

[A Western Slope program is helping older Coloradans maintain independence](#)

The Colorado Trust, by Nancy Lofholm; 3/20/24

[Case example of a 74-year-old widow, wheelchair, who can live alone in her home because of PACE.] ... The center houses the HopeWest PACE program, which delivers wide-ranging services for older adults. HopeWest PACE is a local fulfillment of a national Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services program known as PACE, which stands for Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. HopeWest PACE is one of 150 programs nationwide that carry out the PACE mandate to keep qualifying older adults like Powell living in their homes by providing them with a holistic bundle of health care and social and emotional support. It includes primary and specialty medical care, prescription medications, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, dietary counseling, and mental health counseling.

Technology / Innovations News

[UnitedHealth hack takes toll on healthcare providers to the nation's poor](#)

Reuters, by Julie Steenhuysen; 3/20/24

The ransomware attack on UnitedHealth that has disrupted payments to U.S. doctors and healthcare facilities nationwide for a month, has taken an especially harsh toll on the community health centers that serve more than 30 million poor and uninsured patients. Many large healthcare centers have been able to resume receiving payments and making claims after the hack by using alternative technology, UnitedHealth says. ... One Texas-based association said if

the situation continues through the end of this month, some members will not be able to make payroll.

UnitedHealth says unit Change has restored and rebuilt functions handled by Amazon

Reuters; 3/20/24

UnitedHealth Group said on Wednesday its unit Change Healthcare's cloud-based services for handling medical claims were completely rebuilt and restored, about a month after a cybersecurity attack on the subsidiary crippled healthcare in the United States. Amazon's cloud services for two of Change Healthcare's applications were restored from backups and cleared by their cybersecurity partners, the insurer said.

Providence Chief Nursing Officer: All hospitals should be using these 3 tools

MedCity News, by Katie Adams; 3/19/24

The workforce shortage is especially acute among nurses. There are 193,100 projected job openings per year for nurses in the U.S. between 2022 and 2032, but only 177,400 new nurses are predicted to enter the workforce during that entire 10-year period. That isn't even enough to fill one year's worth of the projected job openings. In order for this issue to improve, hospitals must embrace the technology on the market that has been proven to alleviate nurse burnout, said Syl Trepanier, chief nursing officer at Providence, in a recent interview at the [ViVE](#) conference in Los Angeles. ...

- Robots
- Wearable monitors
- Virtual nursing

General News

Bill to help health workers with burnout moves ahead in Congress

Modern Healthcare, by Michael Mcauliff; 3/20/24

A bill designed to help counter depression, burnout and suicide among healthcare providers cleared a key hurdle Wednesday, passing unanimously out of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Reauthorization Act of 2024 updates and extends for

five years [an earlier version](#) of the law. It funds grants for healthcare organizations and associations to run programs aimed at improving workers' mental health amid staff shortages and ongoing fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Meet the 'Flower Lady': Crafting bouquets of comfort and compassion for hospice patients](#)

NBC 5 On Your Side, by Mike Bush; 3/19/24

In the heart of Evelyn's House, a hospice facility dedicated to providing comfort in life's final moments, resides 79-year-old Anne Hensley, affectionately dubbed the "flower lady" by staff and patients alike. ... Her lifelong passion for floral artistry has since blossomed into a symbol of solace and compassion within the halls of Evelyn's House. ... For Anne, her role as the "flower lady" is more than just arranging bouquets; it's a labor of love rooted in empathy and understanding.

Editor's Note: Evelyn's House is part of [BJC Hospice, St. Louis, MO](#).

Education

[How home care providers build out successful training programs](#)

Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 3/19/24

Building a successful and sustainable caregiver training program in personal home care demands meticulous planning and execution. From defining leadership responsibilities to establishing a comprehensive training schedule, every aspect plays a pivotal role in shaping the program's effectiveness. Strong training programs and ongoing education also go a long way in retaining caregivers in an industry where every provider is trying their best to hold onto the employees they onboard.

Other News

[Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 3/21/24 per \[nasdaq.com\]\(#\)](#)

- [Adus HomeCare \(ADUS: \\$101.33\)](#)
- [Amedisys \(AMED: \\$92.27\)](#)

- [BrightSpring Health \(BTSG: \\$9.33\)](#)

- Encompass (EHC: \$77.08)
- Enhabit (EHAB: \$11.40)
- Ensign Group (ENSG: \$123.77)
- HCA Healthcare (HCA: \$329.14)
- Humana (HUM: \$349.15)
- Pennant Group (PNTG: \$20.44)

- Vitas / Chemed Corp (CHE: \$644.03)

Today's Encouragement

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. - Margaret Mead

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