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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

March 28th, 2024

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Headlines

Here's what a doctor says actually happens when you die

United Business Journal, by Nidhi Dhote; 3/26/24

Death is the great equalizer; it's a subject that intrigues and terrifies us in equal measure. Throughout human history, we've pondered what lies beyond the threshold of life, seeking answers in religion, philosophy, and science. Yet, despite all our advancements, the mystery of death remains largely intact. ... In this article, we'll delve into what happens to our bodies when we die, as explained by medical professionals.

1. The Journey Begins: The First Signs of Dying
2. The Final Breath: Understanding the Mechanics of Death
3. A Slumbering Brain: The Role of Neurotransmitters
4. The Heart's Final Beat: Understanding Cardiac Arrest
5. The Body's Last Hurrah: Understanding Rigor Mortis
6. A Symphony of Decay: Decomposition and Putrefaction
7. Beyond the Physical: Exploring the Mystery of Consciousness
8. The Aftermath: Coping with Grief and Loss

Editor's Note: Hospice leaders from non-clinical backgrounds, use this article to develop your knowledge and empathy for your organization's interdisciplinary team

members who experience these profound phenomena continually, supporting patients and families while tending their own professional stress.

Hospice Provider News

Hospitalists more likely to recommend hospice than specialists: Study

Becker's Hospital Review, by Mariah Taylor; 3/27/24

A New Haven, CT-based Yale School of Medicine study [published in the *American Cancer Society Journals*] suggests oncology hospitalists have better hospice utilization and reduce hospital stays for cancer patients compared to oncologists. Researchers compared referrals for hospice settings from hospitalist-led services and oncologist-led services. Hospitalist-led services referred 11.8% of patients to inpatient hospice settings, nearly double the referral rate of oncologist-led services (5.8%). The adjusted average length of stay before inpatient hospice care was 6.83 days for hospitalist-led care and 16.29 days for oncologist-led care.

Palliative Care Provider News

How home-based care providers are leveraging palliative care in hospital partnerships

Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 3/26/24

Oftentimes, talks between home health providers and their many referral partners are an exercise in education. For providers offering palliative care, that education usually starts at a 101-level. Part of that conversation with hospital and health system partners includes convincing case managers that patients will be better suited at home.

Editor's Note: Features Choice Health at Home CEO David Jackson; Kaiser Permanente Senior Director of Care Hospice and Palliative Care Gina Andres



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Clinical News

Hospice of Santa Barbara offers insights into family grieving

Santa Barbara Independent, by Hospice of Santa Barbara; 3/26/24

Grieving the loss of a family member is a deeply intricate emotional journey. Shared bonds and histories make family grief especially unique. Family grief extends beyond the individual and intertwines with the collective fabric of shared experiences, roles and responsibilities. ... It is common for death to change the family dynamic. This can be a result of several factors, including age, relationship, role, difference in coping mechanisms, heightened stress and emotions, and unresolved family issues which can lead to the resurfacing of past grievances.

Editor's Note: CMS Hospice COPs §418.3 defines: "Bereavement counseling means emotional, psychosocial, and spiritual support and services provided before and after the death of the patient to assist with issues related to grief, loss, and adjustment."

Notice the words "before and after." Your interdisciplinary teams need to understand individual and family grief, within the scope of their roles and responsibilities with family members.

Palliative care in the cardiovascular intensive care unit: A systematic review of current literature

Cardiovascular Revascularization Medicine, by Agastya D Belur, Aryan Mehta, Mridul Bansal, Patrick M Wieruszewski, Rachna Kataria, Marwan Saad, Annaliese Clancy, Daniel J Levine, Neel R Sodha, Douglas M Burt, Gregory S Rachu, J Dawn Abbott, Saraschandra Vallabhajosyula; 3/24/24, online ahead of print

Results: Of 5711 citations, 30 studies were included. All studies were published in the last seven years and 90 % originated in the United States. Heart failure was the most frequent diagnosis (47 %), and in-hospital mortality was reported in 67 % of studies. There was heterogeneity in the timing, frequency, and background of the care team that determined palliative care consultation. In two randomized trials, there appeared to be improvement in quality of life without an impact on mortality.

Tele-palliative care benefits veterans with cardiac, pulmonary diseases

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 3/26/24

Patients with cardiac and pulmonary conditions see improvements in their quality of life after receiving palliative care via telehealth. A randomized clinical trial with 306 participants who suffered from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart failure (HF), and interstitial lung disease (ILD) found that

palliative telehealth resulted in significant improvements. The results were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.



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Regulatory News

EnforceMintz - False Claims Act statistical year in review

Mondaq - Mintz; by Kevin M. McGinty, Laurence Freedman, Karen Lovitch and Brian Dunphy; 3/27/24

Mintz's annual report on False Claims Act case activity analyzes data from the DOJ and the firm's Health Care Qui Tam Database, and explores the 2023 spike in FCA case activity, the ongoing moderate decline in health care-related activity, and continuing robust recoveries in health care cases. ... Also interesting is the absence of hospice care facilities from this year's table. In a number of recent years, those entities had been a growing category of FCA defendants in our internal data.

Mergers & Aquisition News

Private equity more common in Massachusetts health care: Steward crisis has state on hunt for possible legislative response

22 News WWLP.com; by Ashley Shook, Alison Kuznitz, Chirs Lisinski; 3/26/24

The pressure points inflicted by private equity ownership in health care extend far beyond Steward Health Care, and lawmakers have a long menu of policy reforms they can consider to erect new guardrails in a changing environment, experts said Monday. Pushed into public-facing action after a long-simmering financial crisis at Steward burst into public view this year, lawmakers convened a public hearing to explore how deeply private equity has taken root in the Bay State's health care system and what policymakers should do to prevent harm to patient care.

Post-Acute Care News

A nurse practitioner-driven palliative and supportive care service in nursing homes: Evaluation of a quality improvement project

Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing; by Joan G Carpenter, Julianne Murthi, Molly Langford, Ruth Palan Lopez; 3/26/24, online ahead of print

This article describes a quality improvement project implemented by a national postacute long-term care organization aimed at enhancing the provision of palliative care to nursing home residents. ... Most common symptoms that were managed included pain, delirium, and dyspnea; most common diagnoses cared for were dementia and chronic organ failure (eg, cardiac, lung, renal, and neurological diseases).



The burden of getting medical care can exhaust older patients

Navigating Aging, by Judith Graham; 3/27/24

[Ishani Ganguli] is the author of a new study showing that Medicare patients spend about three weeks a year having medical tests, visiting doctors, undergoing treatments or medical procedures, seeking care in emergency rooms, or spending time in the hospital or rehabilitation facilities. ...

[Additionally,] more than 1 in 10 seniors, including those recovering from or managing serious illnesses, spent a much larger portion of their lives getting care — at least 50 days a year. ... When [treatment burden becomes overwhelming], people stop following medical advice and report having a poorer quality of life, the researchers found.

Hosparus affiliate opens \$11 million PACE Center

Louisville Business First, by Shea Van Hoy; 3/26/24

Care Guide Partners, an affiliate of Hosparus Health, has opened the PACE center ... in Elizabethtown, KY. Care Guide Partners' PACE required \$11 million in startup costs, with \$3 million to come from fundraising and donor support. The Schmidt Family Foundation's naming opportunity contribution marks a significant milestone in helping reach this fundraising goal.

Group homes: Pros and cons for senior care

US News & World Report - Health, by Lisa Esposito; 3/25/24

You won't walk lengthy corridors with identical rooms, or see a calendar chock-full of structured activities – but you may smell a home-cooked meal. For some older adults who need long-term care, group homes are providing a more family-style alternative to [nursing homes](#) or assisted living facilities. As with other long-term care options, group homes are licensed in their state and must meet certain standards.



Ethics

Harvard Thinking: Facing death with dignity

The Harvard Gazette, podcast and transcript; moderated by Samantha Laine Perfas; 3/27/24

In podcast episode, a chaplain, a bioethicist, and a doctor talk about end-of-life care.

- Chris Berlin, a clinical chaplain at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and instructor in ministry and spiritual care and counseling and Buddhist ministry at Harvard Divinity School
- Mildred Solomon, a professor of global health and social medicine at Harvard Medical School and president *emerita* of The Hastings Center (international bioethics research institution)
- Tracy Balboni, a radiation oncologist and physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Editor's Note: After going to this article, click on its "Transcript" link to read its full text.

Nurse arrested after morphine, other stolen medical drugs seized in Owensboro

14 News WFIE, by Aaron Chatman; 3/26/24

Eight suspects were arrested and facing numerous charges after a massive drug bust in Owensboro. That's according to the Daviess County Sheriff's Office, who says they opened an investigation after receiving dozens of tips about a drug trafficking operation at the home of Pamela Bartimus. Deputies say Bartimus was an employee of Hospice & Palliative Care of Western Kentucky and had been stealing medication at her job.

General News

Social Work Awareness Month: A spotlight of AOSW

Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC); ACCBuzz Interview with Michael L. Grignon, AOSW President; 3/26/24

AOSW is the world's largest professional organization entirely dedicated to the psychosocial care of people affected by cancer. ... In recognition of March as Social Work Month, ACCCBuzz spoke with AOSW president Michael L. Grignon, LMSW, CCM, MBA, about the importance of oncology social workers, and his vision for the Association during his tenure. ... Why is recognizing Social Work Month important? ...

New Orleans nurses rally before union contract negotiations

Healthcare Journal of New Orleans; 3/26/24

Nurses rallied on March 25 at University Medical Center (UMC) in New Orleans as they began negotiations on their first union contract with LCMC Health, the hospital's management. Nurses at UMC made history in December when they overwhelmingly voted to join National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United (NNOC/NNU), becoming the first unionized private-sector hospital in the state of Louisiana and members of the largest nurse's union in the United States.

Community convening aims to guide solutions to inequities in caregiving

UMass Chan Medical School, by Susan E.W. Spencer; 3/26/24

Jennifer Tjia, MD, MSCE, knows from her experience as a researcher and geriatrician how demanding the role of caregiver can be and how structural barriers impact patient outcomes. She wants to see research that drives solutions to health inequities. The second community convening of the Equity in Caregiving Project, a \$3.8 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health, which Dr. Tjia, professor of population & quantitative health sciences, co-

leads, aims to advance the conversation about what challenges family and clinical caregivers of people with serious illness are experiencing. ... Up to 20 percent of caregivers retire early or quit their job; 22 percent exhaust short-term savings; 20 percent have late or unpaid bills; and 11 percent are unable to afford basic expenses like food, according to Tjia.

2,300 University of Michigan Health workers unionize as part of growing labor movement

Detroit Free Press, by Kristen Jordan Shamus; 3/27/24

More than 2,300 University of Michigan Health employees have joined the Service Employees International Union Healthcare Michigan, part of a growing labor union-represented workforce at the Ann Arbor-based health system. ... Already, about 80% of the workforce at Michigan Medicine belongs to a labor union, the SEIU reported Tuesday.



Education

Alzheimer's deaths expected to grow and industry not prepared with workers, report show

Journal-News, by Samantha Wildow; 3/26/24

The number of Alzheimer's deaths in the U.S. more than doubled between 2000 and 2021, the Alzheimer's Association says in its latest report, which details how about half of health care workers say their industry is not fully equipped to handle the growing population of people with dementia. ... Multiple factors play into why deaths to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia are increasing, including how the health care system is getting better at treating other things like heart disease and cancer, one local doctor said.

Meaningful conversations to have with your loved one

MediaFeed.org, by Merritt Whitley; 3/27/24

“One of the most important concepts in the field of grief and loss is that people drift in and out of the awareness of dying,” says Kenneth Doka, a senior consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America, and professor emeritus of gerontology at the graduate school of The College of New Rochelle. “Sometimes they do talk about it, sometimes not. The dying one should control the agenda. Don’t force conversations on them.” When your loved one feels ready to talk, the following suggestions can be comforting ways to begin a conversation: ...

International News

Covid-19: Life as nurses in first critical incident hospital (London)

Nursing Times, by Edd Church; 3/26/24

Two nurses who were at the epicentre of the Covid-19 outbreak have spoken about their experiences four years on.

Today's Encouragement

Basketball doesn't build character, it reveals it. - James Naismith, Head Coach, University of Kansas Jayhawks (1898-1907)

Editor's Note: [James Naismith](#) invented the sport of basketball in 1891. He is also said to have introduced the first football helmet. He wrote the original basketball rulebook and started the University of Kansas basketball program. He lived to see basketball become an Olympic demonstration sport in [1904](#) and an official event at the [1936 Summer Olympics](#) in Berlin.

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