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HOSPICE &
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TODAY

April 24th, 2024

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Headlines

Breaking News: Labor Department announces final overtime rule

McKnights Senior Living; by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 4/23/24

The Department of Labor on Tuesday announced a final rule that expands overtime protections to millions of salaried workers beginning this summer. The overtime rule increases the salary thresholds necessary to exempt a salaried executive, administrative or professional employee from federal overtime pay requirements. Effective July 1, the salary threshold will increase to the equivalent of an annual salary of \$43,888 and will increase to \$58,656 on Jan. 1. The July 1 increase updates the current annual salary threshold of \$35,568, which is based on a 2019 overtime rule update.

Professor shines light on life incarcerated

The Maroon; by Elinor Upham; 4/19/24

[This article's opening photo features Steven Garner and Calvin Duncan, former Angola inmates in their profound, state-of-the-art Hospice program for inmates.] Sociology professor Marcus Kondkar said he thinks it is everyone's basic civil responsibility to look at what is going on behind prison sentences and look at the people being put in prison. "I think it's a little bit cowardly for us not to confront the consequences of these policies; these punishments have been given out in our names," Kondkar said.

Editor's Note: Steven Garner was featured in our newsletter on 1/1/24, 2/20/24, and 3/3/24 (Sunday's most read articles).

Hospice Provider News

Community partnership with Hinds Hospice brings support

YourCentralValley.com - MedWatch Today; by Juanita Adame; 4/22/24

Facing difficult end-of-life decisions for loved ones is difficult. Community Regional Medical Centers has partnered with Hinds Hospice to bring in an extra layer of support to patients and their families inside the hospital. The services are for patients who cannot be cared for at the home during their end-of-life journey. "We started looking at institutions that could partner with us around delivering inpatient hospice care, not only to reduce our length of stay but to be able to provide a higher level of care for patients in hospice," said Tina Gulbronsen, VP of Capacity Management at Community Medical Centers. "So this change means that there are some patients that can't be discharged safely because they are in some sort of crisis."



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FBI, DEA search Angel Bright Home Health offices Monday, along with state Medicare fraud unit

3NEWS, Corpus Christi, TX; by Ana Tamez and Lexis Greene; 4/22/24

The FBI searched the Angel Bright Home Health Inc. offices Monday morning. FBI Public Affairs Officer Connor Hagan confirmed FBI-Houston agents were partnering with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Texas Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) on an operation on Holly Road. ... 3NEWS found about a dozen agents at the home-health and hospice agency's office throughout the day Monday. At about 1:15 p.m., they began carting out boxes filled with documents and loading them into an unmarked box truck.

Health disparities across states: 6 new findings

Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Kelly Gooch; 4/18/24

The Commonwealth Fund released a new report April 18 examining racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare access, quality and outcomes across the U.S. The report, titled "Advancing Racial Equity in U.S. Health Care: The Commonwealth Fund 2024 State Health Disparities Report," examined state health system performance for five racial and ethnic groups — (non-Hispanic) Black; white; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander; and Hispanic (any race). [Click on the title's link for (1) Six summary findings, and (2) To download the report.

[Maine] Attention Section 43 Hospice Services Providers: Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) implementation delayed until further notice

State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services; 4/22/24

As of March 15, 2023, MaineCare temporarily excluded hospice services from EVV requirements as a delayed enforcement of our approved State Plan requirements. On December 1, 2023, we announced our plan to implement EVV requirements for hospice services starting July 1, 2024. following enactment of P.L. 2023, ch. 576 (LD 2055), *An Act to Prohibit the Department of Health and Human Services from Implementing Electronic Visit Verification for Hospice Providers Within the MaineCare Program Unless Mandated by the Federal Government*, the Department is delaying the implementation of EVV requirements for hospice services until further notice.



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Clinical News

WHO unveils 10 patient safety rights

Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Mariah Taylor; 4/19/24

[The World Health Organization] WHO announced 10 patient safety rights for healthcare. One in every 10 patients experience harm in healthcare, and about 50% of harms are preventable, according to an April 18 news release from WHO.

The Patient Safety Rights Charter is the first to outline patients' rights in the context of safety. ...

1. Timely, effective and appropriate care
2. Safe healthcare processes and practices
3. Qualified and competent health workers
4. Safe medical products and their safe and rational use
5. Safe and secure health care facilities
6. Dignity, respect, nondiscrimination, privacy and confidentiality
7. Information, education and supported decision making
8. Access medical records
9. To be heard and fair resolution
10. Patient and family engagement

Viral moment: Hospice worker reunites with former mentor for touching bedside serenade

FaithIt; by Kelsey Straeter; 4/23/24

In Austinburg, Ohio, at the Austinburg Nursing & Rehab Center, a video capturing a deeply moving moment has gone viral, striking a chord with over half a million viewers. The footage shows hospice worker Joshua Woodard singing a heartfelt rendition of "How Great Thou Art" to his former mentor, Mary Redmond, just days before her peaceful passing. ... Decades ago, Mary Redmond was not only a cherished voice and piano teacher in her community but also a vibrant member of the local arts scene, starring in productions such as "Hello, Dolly!" and "The Music Man." ... One of those lives was a young Joshua Woodard ... She became his first voice coach, leaving a lasting impression that endured through the years.

Regulatory News

Support mounts for increased hospice accreditor oversight

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 4/16/24

Calls are growing louder in support of increased accreditation organization oversight that could help curb fraudulent activity in the hospice space. In a proposed rule released in February the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) introduced a number of provisions aimed at addressing conflicts of interest and establishing more consistent standards, processes and definitions among accreditation entities. The proposed increased oversight

would be an important step forward in addressing instances of fraud, waste and abuse in hospice, according to members of the California Hospice and Palliative Care Association (CHAPCA). Regulatory changes such as these would be particularly significant in detecting maleficence in regions like California, which have a rise in program integrity challenges, the organization stated in a recent letter to Congress shared with Hospice News.

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



20M fewer Medicaid enrollees means trouble for providers

Modern Healthcare; by Nona Tepper; 4/23/24

Over the past year, states have removed more than 20 million beneficiaries from Medicaid after suspending eligibility redeterminations during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Thousands of those people are Clinica Family Health patients. The Lafayette, Colorado-based community health center felt the pain of lost reimbursements when patients went from having Medicaid coverage to being uninsured, a fate that has befallen almost one-fourth of these former Medicaid enrollees nationwide, according to KFF. Clinica Family Health responded with cutbacks but is still in the hole.

What the 'fundamentally contradicting' Medicaid Access Rule includes

Home Health Care News; by Andrew Donlan; 4/22/24

The White House teased the finalized Medicaid Access Rule early Monday, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) later revealed more intricate details attached to the rule. [The] timeline of the rule is now clear. Specifically: ... [Click on the title's link for more]

Medicare Advantage fight shifts to 340B arena

Modern Healthcare; by Alex Kacik; 4/22/24

Hospitals' fight to boost Medicare Advantage reimbursement has extended to plans' pay for 340B drugs. The hospitals' plea to adjust Medicare Advantage pay stems from regulation aimed at making providers that participate in the drug discount program whole after the Supreme Court reversed 340B rate cuts that were in place from 2018 to 2022.



Research News

[Dana-Farber retracts string of studies in systematic review of data integrity](#)

STAT+; by Angus Chen; 4/18/24

An ongoing investigation into data integrity at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has resulted in a string of retractions, the latest of which is a 2006 Science paper co-authored by institute president and CEO Laurie Glimcher. The retraction notice, published in Science on Thursday, noted that the authors had become aware of discrepancies in key scientific images that led them to lose confidence in key figures in the study, although the study's lead author opposed the retraction. The issues with this paper, along with concerns with more than 50 other articles co-authored by four of Dana-Farber's top researchers, were highlighted in a January blog post by the scientific sleuth Sholto David.

Mergers & Aquisition News

[Analysts not ruling out Cigna, Humana merger](#)

Becker's Payer Issues; by Rylee Wilson; 4/22/24

A merger between Humana and Cigna could still be in the cards according to one analyst, *Bloomberg* reported April 22. "The math now works for a [Cigna and Humana] fusion," Jeffries analyst David Windley wrote April 22. Since the two companies abandoned a proposed merger in December, Cigna's stock prices

have risen by 37% and Humana is down 31%, according to *Bloomberg*. Cigna could strike a deal to acquire Humana for around \$420 per share, Mr. Windley wrote in a note to clients. An acquisition would add to Cigna's growth if it does not pay more than \$470 per share for the company, according to Jeffries.

CHS to sell Tennessee hospital

Becker's Hospital Review; by Molly Gamble; 4/18/24

Community Health Systems is preparing to sell off a 351-bed hospital in Tennessee. The Franklin, Tenn.-based health system announced April 18 that it has entered into a definitive agreement to sell 351-bed Tennova Healthcare – Cleveland (Tenn.) to Hamilton Health Care System in Dalton, Ga., for \$160 million in cash. The transaction is expected to close in the third quarter of 2024. Earlier this year, CHS CEO Tim Hingtgen said the 71-hospital company was evaluating interest for sales that could yield more than \$1 billion in proceeds. In 2023, CHS sold hospitals in West Virginia, Arkansas, and Florida.

Technology / Innovations News

Health systems creating new IT C-suite roles

Becker's Hospital Review; by Naomi Diaz; 4/19/24

In response to evolving demands within the healthcare landscape, hospitals and health systems are reconfiguring their C-suites and leadership teams to align with organizational priorities. Among the recent developments, several institutions have introduced new roles to their executive teams. [Click on the title's link for examples.]

Mercy Hospital surgeon teaches high school students future of surgical medicine

CBS News TV 13 Sacramento, CA; 4/21/24

A unique experience for high school students, taking a step into the world of robotic surgery. Mercy Hospital hosted students to learn the ins and outs of the future of surgical medicine.

Ethics

Behind the stethoscope: Exploring nursing ethics

Noozhawk, Santa Barbara County; by Green Shoot Media; 4/22/24

The American Nurses Association developed a Code of Ethics for Nurses in the 1950s. It has been revised over the years to respond to technological advances and changes in society and the nursing field. Gallup takes a poll every year asks how the public ranks various professions for having high honesty and ethics. For 22 straight years, nurses come in as the most respected in terms of honesty and ethics. In 2024, 78% of the poll takers perceived them as honest.

General News

Providence employees awarded \$98M in wage suit

Modern Healthcare; by Hayley Desilva; 4/22/24

A jury awarded more than \$98 million to Providence Health and Services employees in a class action lawsuit over claims the health system illegally denied meal breaks and pay for time worked. King County Superior Court Judge Averil Rothrock, who presided over the case, also ruled Thursday that the health system willfully withheld wages, which under Washington state law could entitle workers to double the amount of damages awarded.

30 systems sign on to new effort to advance age-friendly care

Becker's Clinical Leadership, by Erica Carbajal; 4/17/24

Thirty health systems are participating in a new [collaborative](#) through the Institute for Healthcare Improvement that aims to accelerate the adoption of age-friendly care for older adults. The Age-Friendly System-Wide Spread Collaborative is billed as a learning and action community through which systems will focus on embedding four evidence-based elements of high-quality care for older adults: what matters, medication, mentation and mobility, known as the 4Ms. Participants — which include Los Angeles-based Cedars Sinai, New York City-based Mount Sinai Health System and Atlanta-based Grady Health — will share data and collaborate to advance their own improvements in scaling age-friendly care across their sites of care. Participants also have the opportunity to be among the first to achieve a new IHI recognition for systemwide adoption of the 4Ms.

International News

Debates begin in the Assembly on the “end of life” bill; Catherine Vautrin calls for a “spirit of humanity, listening and respect”

Times.News - France; The Minister of Labor, Catherine Vautrin, and the president of the special commission, Agnès Firmin Le Bodo, on April 22 at the Assembly; 4/22/24

At the opening of the work of the special committee of the National Assembly, ... on the "end of life" bill, the Minister of Health, Catherine Vautrin, called on the deputies to have a parliamentary debate which takes place in "a spirit of humanity, listening and respect." ... At the heart of the questions is the fact of offering certain patients the means of committing suicide ... This "assisted dying" will be reserved for adult patients, born in France or residing in the country for a long time, and able to clearly express their wishes. ... "I have heard fears to which I hope we can respond point by point, a strong demand for clarity and precision, an expectation of vigilance with regard to the sensitivity of the subject", assured Ms. Vautrin. ... Hoping for a debate full of "humility, seriousness and respect for all convictions" ... [From MP Carline Fiat,] "We can disagree but we have to be careful with the words we say," she told the deputies present in this committee.

Editor's Note: May we--in the United States--learn from this French leadership. Each day, dozens of inflam matory, one-sided articles appear in the newsfeeds we use for this newsletter. We seek to select and post factual, informative articles about Medical Aid in Dying (aka "assisted suicide") that foster "a debate full of humility, seriousness and respect for all convictions" and "a spirit of humanity, listening and respect."

Other News

Executive compensation at HCA, CHS, Tenet and UHS: 7 things to know

Becker's Hospital Review; by Alan Condon; 4/16/24

Most of the top-earning executives, including CEOs and CFOs, at four of the largest for-profit health systems in the U.S. saw their overall compensation increase in 2023, according to proxy statements recently filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Seven things to know about executive compensation at HCA Healthcare (Nashville, Tenn.), Community Health Systems (Franklin, Tenn.), Tenet Healthcare (Dallas) and Universal Health Services (King of Prussia, Pa.): ... [Click on the title's ar ticle for salary figures.]

Today's Encouragement

Every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day. -
Alice Morse Earle

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