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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

April 25th, 2024

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Breaking News

UPMC lays off 1,000 employees, citing market challenges

Modern Healthcare; by Caroline Hudson; 4/24/24

UPMC is laying off about 1,000 employees, or slightly more than 1% of its workforce. The layoffs are effective immediately, a spokesperson said Wednesday. The cuts mostly affect non-clinical, non-member-facing and administrative employees, Paul Wood, chief communications officer at UPMC, said in a statement. ... Pittsburgh-based UPMC operates 40 hospitals and 800 doctor's offices and outpatient sites in Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland and some international locations. Its insurance division covers more than 4 million members. The nonprofit health system reported a \$31 million net loss in 2023, compared with a more than \$1 billion loss the prior year. Operating losses for 2023 totaled \$198 million.

Headlines

Hospice nurse reveals the most common deathbed regrets

Unilad; by Niamh Shackleton; 4/24/24

Bronnie Ware, a nurse who has spent a large majority of her career working in palliative care, found that there were five common things that people regretted about their lives upon reflection as they approached death.

- I wish I hadn't dedicated so much of my life to working so hard. ...
- I wish I'd lived my life the way I wanted, not how others expected me to behave. ...
- I regret losing touch with so many of my friends. ...
- I wish I'd been brave enough to express my feelings more. ...
- I wish I'd let myself be happier. ...

Bronnie says, as per Metro Online: "Life is a choice. It is YOUR life. Choose consciously, choose wisely, choose honestly. Choose happiness."

Editor's Note: This is used for "Today's Encouragement."

Hospice Provider News

[Change Management] Improving governance and compliance with knowledge management

Outsourced Pharma; Guest Column by Irwin Hirsh; 4/23/24

Knowledge management and knowledge sharing provide powerful levers for removing obstacles to business success. Here, ... I want to raise awareness of how knowledge management supports the demands of compliance and governance. ... [Includes:]

- Customer-Centric, Yes, But Who Is Your Customer? ...
- Process Level and System Level Governance ...
 - Process level ...
 - System level ...
- Change Management ... [well-communicated X-matrix with easy-to-access digital bowling charts ...]
- Obstacles to Implementation ...
- Knowledge Sharing ...
- Mutual Respect ...
- Enable Continuous Improvement ...
- Cross Business Lines ...



Accelerate Impact
Accelerate Influence
Accelerate Innovation

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Skepticism is healthy, but in medicine, it can be dangerous

The New York Times; Guest Essay, by Dr. Daniela J. Lamas; 4/24/24

I arrived at the hospital one recent morning to find a team of doctors gathered just outside a patient room. The patient was struggling — his breaths too fast and too shallow. For days we had been trying to walk the line between treating the pain caused by his rapidly growing cancer and prolonging his life. [The author describes interactions with the family.] ... We are at a crossroads in medicine when it comes to public trust. After a pandemic that twisted science for political gain, it is not surprising that confidence in medicine is eroding. . . . Our medical system relies on trust — in face-to-face meetings as well as public health bulletins. Distrust can lead doctors to burnout and can encourage avoidable negative outcomes for our patients.

Editor's Note: For a patient/caregiver/family to agree to a hospice admission, they must first trust the physician who refers them to your organization. Before that, the referring physician must trust your organization. Too often, "trust" is diluted as a "soft skill." "Trust"--as described in this article--is a cornerstone, a foundation of strength, endurance, and integrity in the hardest, most conflicted times of decisions about living and dying that a person (and family) might face.

New facility is first in Wisconsin to serve homeless people with terminal illnesses

Wisconsin Public Radio; by Sarah Lehr; 4/23/24

A new facility in Madison aims to help people die with dignity, even when they can't afford a home. The four-bed residential facility officially opened this week, as the first of its kind in Wisconsin. Solace Home is open to adults who have less than six months to live, and who are dealing with homelessness or housing insecurity. ... "We have trained our staff and volunteers extensively to be ready for the unique needs of this population," [Executive Director Kendra] Deja said. "So they received training in things like trauma and mental illness and substance abuse. ...

Hall to retire from Hospice; new KEDCO CEO to be announced

Times Union Online; by David L. Slone; 4/23/24

In giving their quarterly reports to the Kosciusko County Commissioners Tuesday, one organization revealed a forthcoming retirement while the second organization said a new CEO would be taking the helm in June. Suzie Light, Kosciusko Economic Development Corporation interim co-CEO, reported during KEDCO's first quarter she and Greg Fitzloff served as interim co-CEOs. ... "We are not making a public announcement. We are happy to report that there will be a public announcement soon on the new CEO, who will take the helm in mid June. We're really excited that we've got a very talented individual who's coming on board. ...," Light stated.



Palliative Care Provider News

Leadership's perceptions of palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study

Journal of Pain and Symptom Management; by Tamara Vesel, Audrey Covalesski, Veronica Burkarth, Emma Ernst, Linda Vesel; 4/19/24

Background: This study aimed to explore the perceptions, understanding, and utilization of palliative care before compared to during the COVID-19 pandemic among health system leadership.

Results: ... Emerging themes included the role of palliative care before compared to during the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitators and barriers to palliative care delivery, and recommendations for future practice. Participants reported that the COVID-19 pandemic increased palliative care utilization, reinforced positive perceptions of the specialty, and emphasized its role in maximizing healthcare efficiency. Many participants found palliative care financing to be a barrier to delivery; ...

Clinical News

Psychosocial distress screening among interprofessional palliative care teams: A narrative review

Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care; by Chelsea K Brown and Cara L Wallace; 4/23/24

With increased need for palliative care and limited staffing resources, non-social workers are increasingly responsible for screening for urgent psychosocial distress. The National Consensus Project guidelines call for all palliative care team members to be competent in screening across domains. ... Although an abundance of validated screening tools exists for outpatient oncology-specific settings, there is minimal guidance on psychosocial screening tools intended for specialty palliative care. The most oft-cited tools have been met with concern for validity across diverse palliative care populations and settings. ...

Employing telehealth to ease the hospice transition for kids with cancer

mHealthIntelligence; by Anuja Vaidya; 4/23/24

... In a study published in the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* last month, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta researchers detailed a telehealth-based intervention the hospital has employed to ease the transition to hospice for young cancer patients and their families. ... The intervention includes a series of coordinated telehealth visits during the first month of hospice enrollment for children or young adults, 29 or younger, with cancer. ... Hospice nurses participating in the pilot received a tablet equipped with mobile WiFi cellular service that they would take to the family's home, which enabled the [hospital/pediatric specialty] nurses and families to join the call. ... The most important finding of the study was that coordinated telehealth visits between the hospital, hospice, and the families during the first month of hospice enrollment were feasible and acceptable to all participants.



The cancer caregiving burden trajectory over time: varying experiences of perceived versus objectively measured burden

The Oncologist; by Laura A Siminoff, Maureen Wilson-Genderson, Marcin Chwistek, Maria Thomson; 4/23/24

Conclusions: Cancer caregiving is dynamic; [caregivers] CGs must adjust to the progression of the patient's disease. We found an association between subjective and objective burden both within and between CGs. Black CGs were more likely to report lower subjective burden compared to their White counterparts. More detailed investigation of the sociocultural components that affect caregiver experience of burden is needed to better understand how and where to best intervene with targeted supportive care services.

Regulatory News

CMS increases hours to 3.48 in final staffing rule

McKnights Long-Term Care News; by Kimberly Marselas; 4/22/24

Nursing homes will be required to deliver 3.48 hours of daily direct care per patient under a final staffing mandate issued this morning. A White House statement on the rule [4/22] said that 3.0 hours must be split between registered nurses at 0.55 hours and 2.45 hours for certified nurse aides. The remaining time was not immediately defined by the White House release, and the full rule text was not available.

Extra: CMS publishes rule outlining final staffing requirements

McKnights Long-Term Care News; by Kimberly Marselas; 4/22/24

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services said it would exempt nursing homes from having registered nurse coverage for up to 8 out of 24 hours a day “under certain circumstances,” unveiling a critical new detail in the second part of today’s staffing rule rollout. A director of nursing also can count toward the rule’s 24/7 RN requirement, CMS said, noting a change that providers will likely appreciate given their persistent challenges hiring RNs across the country. “The RN onsite 24 hours a day, seven days a week requirement ensures that there is an RN available to help mitigate, and ultimately reduce, the likelihood of preventable safety events, particularly during evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays,” CMS said. ...



HOSPICE ANALYTICS

TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

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States lack resources to support new Medicaid waiver programs, association asserts

McKnights Home Care; by Adam Healy; 4/22/24

Medicaid 1115 waivers, which are commonly used to improve or expand home- and community-based services, face serious challenges as understaffed state programs are increasingly incapable of moving proposals through the administrative “pipeline,” the National Association of Medicaid Directors said in a recent letter. “The tough reality is that the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services, which has taken many steps to streamline its administrative processes, simply does not have the staff resources to move forward all of the waivers in its pipeline,” Kate McEvoy, executive director of NAMD, wrote in the letter.

Medicare Advantage complaints that the plans don’t want – and the review of systems that wasn’t done

RACmonitor; by Ronald Hirsch, MD, FACP, ACPA-C, CHCQM, CHRI; 4/24/24

... In the past, I have talked about complaining to your regional Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) office about violations of CMS-4201-F, but Dr. [Eddie] Hu described how to do it to actually get action. [Click on the title's link for details] ... Now, why should you take the time to file these complaints? ... Why should you take the time to file these complaints? Because CMS tracks formal complaints, and a lot of complaints can significantly affect their quality bonus – and we know how when their money is at risk, the MA plans suddenly pay attention. ...

Public Policy News

New York State Bar Association backs expansion of end-of-life-options

Brooklyn Daily Eagle - Courts and Law; by Robert Abruzzese; 4/23/24

The New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) has endorsed the Medical Society of the State of New York's recent support for medical aid in dying. ... The proposed New York bill (A995a/S2445), which will be considered in the 2024 legislative session, includes comprehensive safeguards to ensure that the process is voluntary, informed and free from coercion. These include the confirmation of terminal illness by two independent physicians, mandatory mental health evaluations if needed and detailed counseling on all available end-of-life care options. ...

Post-Acute Care News

Deadly shove at assisted-living center in Hugo investigated as homicide

StarTribune, Minneapolis, MN; by Paul Walsh; 4/24/24

An assisted-living center resident in Hugo was pushed by another resident and died in what officials are calling a homicide, according to a court filing. Linda S. Steen 75, was shoved on March 11 at Good Life Assisted Living & Me and suffered a broken hip, the Washington County Sheriff's Office said in a search warrant affidavit filed Tuesday. Steen was put in hospice care and died on March 30, read the affidavit, which cleared the way for a sheriff's detective to collect the medical records of the 74-year-old resident who is suspected of pushing Steen.

Technology / Innovations News

Operator hopes to expand residents' digital literacy with unique tech concierge program

McKnights Senior Living; by John O'Connor; 4/22/24

Beginning in June, residents in some BHI Senior Living communities will be able to take advantage of a unique tech concierge program. For residents, the new service will feature on-demand tech support, alongside virtual assistance, in-home appointments and a curriculum of tailored enrichment classes and training sessions. For the operator, the program will deliver immediate tech support while also gathering and analyzing data that can be used to inform future technology investments and strategic moves.

Editor's Note: How might you adapt this creative service for the persons you serve? What differences might it make in patient care? In hospice caregiver/family satisfaction? What tech support do you have for your staff, especially when they are

making home or other in-the-field visits? Relating this to today's articles on the importance of "trust" and "nurses' negativity about AI," do your innovative technologies improve or impede the patient/family's needs and experiences with you?

Kisco Senior Living data breach could affect more than 26,000

McKnights Senior Living; by Lois A. Bowers; 4/22/24

More than 26,000 Kisco Senior Living residents and others could have been affected by a June hacking incident, legal counsel for the company said last week. The Carlsbad, CA-based operator, which manages 25 senior living communities across eight states and Washington, DC, said in an April 16 letter to those potentially affected that the data breach occurred around June 6. Names and Social Security numbers could have been revealed in the incident, according to counsel.

Change cyberattack affected 'substantial proportion' of America

Modern Healthcare; by Lauren Berryman; 4/23/24

UnitedHealth Group said the cyberattack against its Change Healthcare unit potentially exposed the personal information of "a substantial proportion of people in America," and it will be months before it is able to identify and notify patients affected. The company also confirmed it paid an unspecified ransom to protect patient data, as reported by Bloomberg Monday.

Nurses protest AI at Kaiser Permanente

Becker's Health IT; by Giles Bruce; 4/22/24

Hundreds of nurses gathered April 22 to protest the use of artificial intelligence at Oakland, Calif.-based Kaiser Permanente. The California Nurses Association held the demonstration at Kaiser Permanente's San Francisco Medical Center to coincide with the beginning of KP International's Integrated Care Experience conference. "It is deeply troubling to see Kaiser promote itself as a leader in AI in healthcare, when we know their use of these technologies comes at the expense of patient care, all in service of boosting profits," said Michelle Gutierrez Vo, BSN, RN, a president of the California Nursing Association and registered nurse at Kaiser Permanente Fremont (Calif.) Medical Center, in a statement. ...

Ethics

The moral compass of medicine: Exploring ethical dilemmas

Medscape; by Lambeth Hochwald; 4/23/24

While the ethical conflicts discussed in medical school once focused primarily on patient privacy, end-of-life issues, and conflicts of interest with pharmaceutical companies, today, the list of ethical dilemmas facing physicians has risen to include everything from gender care and vaccine issues to weight loss drug access and abortion regulations in some states. ... So, what happens when a physician's expertise clashes with local, state, or national politics?

General News

Patients tell me they've had a paranormal experience. I believe them — I had one too.

MSN HuffPost; by Scott Janssen; 4/23/24

Tank's life has been full of conflict and strife. Now he's stuck in a wheelchair on his back porch with me, a hospice social worker, peppering him with questions. He's pondering my query about why he's feeling peace about his impending death. His eyes soften as he motions with his head toward the workshop near the back fence. "You remember me telling you about my older boy?" he asks. "The one that died by suicide?" I ask. "Yeah, I remember." "If you count my old man, I was the second-worst father that ever lived. Most of my life I figured I'd go straight to hell when I died." ...

A leading authority in senior care and services: Seniors Blue Book

Iowanews Headlines; 4/23/24

Seniors Blue Book, a trusted name in senior care and services, has been recognized as a leading authority in the industry. With a dedication to improving the lives of seniors and their families, Seniors Blue Book has consistently demonstrated its commitment to providing high-quality, reliable information and resources for the senior community. ... For over 40 years, Seniors Blue Book has been at the forefront of the senior care and services industry, offering a wide range of resources and solutions designed to improve the lives of older adults and their families.

Today's Encouragement

Life is a choice. It is YOUR life. Choose consciously, choose wisely, choose honestly. Choose happiness. - by Bronnie Ware

Editor's Note: This quote is from today's article, "Hospice nurse reveals the most common deathbed regrets."

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