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April 26th, 2024

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Headlines

[How the FTC's ban on noncompetes will shake up healthcare workforce strategies](#)

Healthleaders; by Jay Asser; 4/25/24

CEOs will have to adjust their strategies to maintain their workforce if the final rule stands.

Key Takeaways:

- In a seismic decision impacting providers, the FTC passed a 3-2 vote to ban employers from using noncompete clauses.
- However, the FTC's lack of jurisdiction on nonprofits means that the rule may only apply to for-profit entities, potentially creating an uneven playing field and negative outcomes for both types of organizations.
- Healthcare leaders will have to recalibrate their recruitment and retention efforts as the competition for talent will become even more robust.

Editor's Note: For detailed information about how this will apply to some nonprofits, see "How the FTC noncompete ban affects nonprofit providers" in our newsletter today.

How the FTC noncompete ban affects nonprofit providers

Modern Healthcare; by Alex Kacik; 4/25/24

The Federal Trade Commission's ban on noncompete agreements will apply to some healthcare nonprofits, lawyers said. ... In the final rule, the FTC offers an example of a nonprofit hospital that employed 100 physicians. The commission would have jurisdiction "because the organization engaged in business on behalf of for-profit physician members," the rule states. ... The FTC created a carve-out for senior executives in the final rule. Existing noncompete agreements with senior executives, defined as workers who earn more than \$151,164 a year and are in policymaking positions, can remain in place. But employers are barred from enforcing new noncompete provisions with senior executives.

Editor's Note: For a broader summary of this rule, see "How the FTC's ban on noncompetes will shake up healthcare workforce strategies" in our newsletter today.

45 top healthcare workplaces for mental well-being: Newsweek

Becker's Hospital Review; by Alexis Kayer, 4/22/24

Newsweek has named 45 hospitals and health systems among its 750 greatest employers for mental well-being. The publication partnered with data researchers Plant-A to rank the top U.S. workplaces "making a positive difference in the mental wellness of their workers," according to a five-stage evaluation. ... Here are the 45 hospitals and health systems included on the list, excluding organizations that exclusively provide long-term, hospice, rehabilitative and medical care, or staffing and management services: [Click on the title's link for the list.]

Editor's Note: Is your organization on the list? Or perhaps a colleague's organization? Forward this to them with your congratulations! Invite them to join our newsletter for free at www.HospicePalliativeCareToday.com/registration.



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Hospice Provider News

Remembrance Ceremony raises more than \$76,000 for nonprofit hospice services

Press Release; Avow Hospice, Naples, FL; 4/24/24

Avow [Hospice] gathered hundreds of individuals in Cambier Park for its 18th annual Butterfly Release on April 6, 2024. The remembrance ceremony was marked by an outpouring of generosity, with attendees and supporters contributing more than \$76,000 to support Avow's mission. Funds raised will directly benefit Avow community bereavement programs, ensuring that it can continue to offer free grief and loss services to the community. The ceremony gave flight to more than 1,000 butterflies, symbolizing hope, transformation, and remembrance. The moving celebration of life honored 650 loved ones as their names were read aloud during the ceremony.

New hospice home set to open in Burton, offering home-like care for end-of-life patients

mLive.com; by Fuad Shalhout; 4/25/24

A new hospice home is expected to open in Burton [MI] this summer. ... By creating a guest home in Burton, individuals will receive hospice care in a home-like setting to live out their final days instead of a hospital. ... "We've been renovating it for the last six months just making it safe for people," said Diane Welker, one of the group's founders and a retired palliative care nurse practitioner at Hurley Medical Center. The foundation received a \$4,300 grant from Home Depot to pay for the flooring, and the Community Foundation of Greater Flint provided a \$45,000 grant to help with renovations.

Missoula's first end-of-life center taking shape amid fundraising

MissoulaCurrent; by Martin Kidston; 4/24/24

... Missoula's first dedicated hospice center broke ground last June and is well on its way to opening early next year. The 15,000 square-foot facility has been planned down to the finest detail, from the play of lighting and sound in each room to a reflection center, with end-of-life literature and bereavement support for families. "Missoula has one of the fastest aging and oldest populations in the country. Not only that, we have a vast expanse of area to cover," said Amanda Melro [Executive Director, Partners of Hope Foundation]. "People live in rural areas and they also live alone. Having a place like this where a family knows

they'll be well-taken care of is a huge asset for them. We expect there will be a large demand for the beds.”



Commercial Capital Connect unveils \$25M financing for home health care & hospice agencies nationwide – revolving credit lines & term loans up to \$750K

Consumer Infoline; 4/25/24

Commercial Capital Connect, a leading marketplace for commercial finance solutions, today announced the launch of a \$25 million financing program to provide revolving lines of credit and term loans to home health care and hospice agencies across the United States. ... “The home health care and hospice sectors play a vital role in our communities, providing essential services that enable people to receive quality care in the comfort of their homes,” said Cheryl Tibbs, President of Commercial Capital Connect.

VNA completes land purchase near hospital

VeroNews.com; by Lisa Zahner; 4/25/24

The Visiting Nurse Association of the Treasure Coast finally owns the land under its Hospice House building after closing last week on the purchase for \$3.8 million of a prime chunk of real estate just east of Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital. For decades, VNA had leased the 14.56-acre parcel on 37th Street from the Hospital District. The 12,000-square-foot 12-bed Hospice House, plus 4.2 acres of tropical meditation gardens, and a memorial are situated at the rear or south end of the parcel, while more than half of the land with 37th Street frontage remains vacant.

Palliative Care Provider News

Oncology social workers' involvement in palliative care: Secondary data analysis from nationwide oncology social workers survey

Palliative & Supportive Care; by Ting Guan, Karlynn BrintzenhofeSzoc, Alyssa Middleton, Shirley Otis-Green, Tara Schapmire, Makeeta Rayton, Krista Nelson, Michael L Grignon, Brad Zebrack; 4/24/24

Results: Responses from a secondary data set of 243 oncology social workers involved in palliative care results in a 6-factor solution comprising 34 tasks. These factors were identified as: Therapeutic Interventions for Individuals, Couples, and Families; Facilitate Patient Care Decision-making; Care Coordination; Assessment and Emotional Support; Organization and Community Service; and Equity and Justice.

Significance of results: The findings can be used to develop job descriptions and education for social workers employed in palliative cancer care. The clear role descriptions also make social work visible to other professionals in palliative oncology. By clarifying the roles of oncology social workers, this study contributes to the improvement of palliative care delivery and enhances interprofessional collaboration within cancer care teams.



Eagle Telemedicine announces solution to counter lack of palliative care

Cision, PRNewswire-PRWeb; by Eagle Telemedicine; 4/25/24

Eagle Telemedicine adds new specialty to increase access to life-saving palliative care in underserved communities. ... Only 71% of U.S. hospitals provide palliative care and metropolitan hospitals are 15% more likely to offer palliative care than rural hospitals (National Institute of Health). Through Eagle's Tele-Palliative Care, hospitals everywhere can offer this next level of care, any day of the year.

Regulatory News

Analysis finds 4 in 5 nursing facilities don't meet staffing requirements

McKnights Long-Term Care News; by Josh Henreckson; 4/24/24

More than 80% of nursing homes do not meet the updated requirements in the final staffing mandate from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services,

according to new analysis from media outlet KFF. Those findings further amplify the chorus of concerns raised by providers following the news that CMS was raising its proposed requirement of 3.0 hours of care per resident per day to 3.48 in Monday's final rule. CMS leaders, including Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, attempted to address sector questions and concerns at a press event Tuesday afternoon. ...

NAHC expresses disappointment regarding Medicaid Access Rule

HomeCare; 4/23/24

The National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) released a statement noting that it was, 'extremely disappointed that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) elected to finalize the "payment adequacy" provision in the Medicaid Access Final Rule (CMS 2442-F).' "This is a misguided policy that will result in agency closures, force providers to exit the Medicaid program, and will ultimately make access issues worse around the country," a statement from the organization read. "As NAHC and our partners across the homecare industry have demonstrated, such a provision is not only unworkable due to the varied nature of Medicaid programs across the country, CMS also lacks statutory authority to impose this mandate."



Hospice groups, AOs speak out on proposed Accreditor Oversight Rule

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 4/22/24

Some accreditation organizations (AOs) have balked at the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) proposed rule designed to strengthen oversight of those institutions. ... Three such organizations currently have deeming authority for hospices, The Joint Commission, the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) and Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP). These accreditors have joined a host of other stakeholders in

making public comments on the proposed rule, with some requesting clarifications and others outright denying that CMS has the authority to establish such requirements.

Quality in Motion: Acting on the CMS National Quality Strategy

CMS - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; 4/22/24

In 2022, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched the CMS National Quality Strategy (NQS), a plan aimed at improving the quality and safety of health care for everyone, with a special focus on people from underserved and under-resourced communities. ... The CMS National Quality Strategy has four priority areas, each with two goals. This action plan provides details on how CMS is putting these eight goals into action.

- Equity and Engagement
- Outcomes and Alignment
- Safety and Resiliency
- Interoperability and Scientific Advancement

Editor's Note: Download this CMS April 2024, 54-page PDF.

Mergers & Acquisition News

PE-Backed Legacy Hospice acquires HomeCare Hospice

Levin Associates; by Avery Swett; 4/19/24

Legacy Hospice, backed by the Chicago-based private equity firm Prairie Capital, announced this week its acquisition of HomeCare Hospice ... HomeCare Hospice is a leading provider of hospice and palliative care services throughout the state of Mississippi. The company operates four locations across the state.

The M&A strategies behind HouseWorks, Care Advantage and PurposeCare

Home Health Care News; by Joyce Famakinwa; 4/23/24

Home-based care stakeholders are navigating a very different environment than they were in the past. No one understands that better than prolific acquirers like HouseWorks, PurposeCare and Care Advantage. All three companies are doing unique things to maintain growth in 2024, however. Firstly, over the last few years, there has been a vast chasm between buyers and sellers. That gap may be beginning to close, however.

Technology / Innovations News

AI could play role in preventing prescribing of unnecessary drugs in older adults

McKnights Senior Living; by Kristen Fischer; 4/22/24

A new study finds that artificial intelligence could encourage doctors to stop prescribing drugs that aren't necessary — especially in older adults, who tend to be on multiple medications. The report was published 4/18 in the *Journal of Medical Systems*. More than 40% of older adults are taking five or more prescription medications, a rate that raises their risk for potentially harmful drug interactions. ... AI isn't a perfect tool compared with having an actual doctor. For instance, it tended not to pay much attention to a person's pain level, suggesting that the patient stop taking pain medications but not others for clinical ailments such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure, the authors reported.

General News

Beyond compensation: Culture as a benefit

HR Daily Advisor; by G Hatfield; 4/24/24

Compensation is not the only factor that nurses consider when choosing a health system. Benefits packages, workplace culture, safety, and flexibility all play a role in the decision-making process. CNOs should take a look at their health system's offerings to make sure they are attractive to new nurses and that they are staying competitive in the industry. During the *HealthLeaders' Nurse Labor and Compensation NOW Summit*, Robin Steaban, Chief Nursing Officer at Vanderbilt University Hospital, spoke about innovative perks to attract and keep nurses, and how workplace culture and safety play a role as benefits alongside compensation.

PeaceHealth's home nurses authorize a potential second strike

The Lund Report; by Nathan Wilk; 4/23/24

Homecare and hospice nurses at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart in Springfield [OR] have authorized a second strike that could last indefinitely. The nurses are seeking a contract with same wage increases as their in-hospital counterparts. They previously went on strike for two weeks in February. ...During the previous strike, nurses accused PeaceHealth of providing poor replacement

care to patients. If this strike goes through, Waltasti said it would continue to provide uninterrupted services, but he also pointed to other options for patients.

Education

Survey illustrates value of quality onboarding programs at home care firms

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

Investing in a robust, high-quality onboarding and training program can yield big returns for home care firms, especially when workers are in short supply, according to a new survey report by healthcare technology company Viventium. The firm surveyed 175 administrators and 220 caregivers working at post-acute care firms. It found that caregivers are nearly 90% more likely to feel secure in their employment and be more engaged with their work after having a good onboarding experience. These positive results can lead to lower turnover rates and better-trained employees, according to the report.

Other News

Executive Personnel Changes - 4/26/24

- [Navian Hawaii names Dan Haire as President and CEO](#)
- [AdventHealth has named Jonathan Armstrong as CFO of AdventHealth DeLand \(FL\)](#)
- [Interim HealthCare Inc. has named Donna Merritt as Vice President of Clinical Quality](#)
- [Johns Hopkins Medicine has named Cherly Sadro as Senior Vice President and CFO](#)
- [Ascension has named](#)
 - [Patti Consolver as Vice President of Front End Revenue Cycle](#)
 - [Chad Dilley as President of Ascension St. Vincent Carmel](#)
 - [Amber Sims as Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy and Growth Officer](#)
 - [Michelle Kohler, PhD, as Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, effective June 1](#)
 - [Dino Rhodes as Vice President and Head of Marketing at St. Louis](#)

- Michael Israel will retire as president and CEO of Westchester Medical Center and the Westchester Medical Center Health Network in Valhalla, N.Y., at the end of 2025

Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 4/25/24 per nasdaq.com

- Adus HomeCare (ADUS: \$92.00)
- Amedisys (AMED: \$91.34)
- BrightSpring Health (BTSG: \$10.53)
- Encompass (EHC: \$82.24)
- Enhabit (EHAB: \$9.88)
- Ensign Group (ENSG: \$117.77)
- HCA Healthcare (HCA: \$314.15)
- Humana (HUM: \$310.11)
- Pennant Group (PNTG: \$20.34)
- Vitas / Chemed Corp (CHE: \$574.68)

Cardinal Health, OptumRx break up

Becker's Hospital Review; by Paige Twenter; 4/22/24

Cardinal Health's pharmaceutical distribution contracts with OptumRx, a subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group, will not be renewed, the medical distributor said April 22. The contracts, which mainly included non-specialty bulk shipments to Optum's mail dispensing sites, will expire in late June. In 2023, sales to OptumRx generated 16% of Cardinal Health's consolidated revenue. "Total sales to OptumRx generate a meaningfully lower operating margin than the overall pharmaceutical and specialty solutions segment," Cardinal said. McKesson Corp. won the contract, according to *Bloomberg*, which cited Evercore ISI.

Today's Encouragement

When the story of these times gets written, we want it to say that we did all we could, and it was more than anyone could have imagined. - Bono

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