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May 8th, 2024

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Headlines

TCN News Stories of the Month, April 2024

TCN Talks; by Chris Comeaux and Mark Cohen; 5/1/24

In this podcast Chris and Mark discuss our newsletter's top news stories for the month of April as reported in **Hospice and Palliative Care Today**. You can subscribe for free h

ere: <https://www.hospicepalliativecaretoday.com/registration>.

Honoring Nurses Week: Workplace factors that are 'extremely important' to nurses

Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Mariah Taylor; 5/6/24

... The survey asked nurses how important different elements of the workplace were. Here are the six elements of the workplace with the percentage of nurses who said it was "extremely important":

- Better pay rates for nurses: 75%
- More nurses per patient: 68%
- Better scheduling/hours for nurses: 58%
- More recognition for nurses: 47%
- More wellness programs for nurses: 42%
- More diversity among nurses: 26%

Steward files for bankruptcy

Becker's Hospital CFO Report; by Laura Dyrda; 5/6/24

Dallas, Texas-based Steward Health Care filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and will

receive millions in financing from Medical Properties Trust to maintain operations at existing hospitals and clinics, according to a May 6 health system news release. The 30 hospitals in the Steward network will continue patient care during the bankruptcy proceedings, and the physician-led health system does not expect interruptions to daily operations. ... The for-profit health system has faced financial challenges and liquidity issues in recent months, blaming low reimbursement from government payers and increasing costs for labor, materials and operations due to inflation. The system also reported continuing to experience negative financial effects from the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Hospice Provider News

Over \$293k bequeathed to Valley Hospice by former Marshall County teacher

The Intelligencer, Wheeling News-Register; by Shelley Hanson; 5/7/24; titled "Nearly \$1.5M Bequeathed to Organizations by Former Marshall County Teacher"
[Wheeling, WV] Nearly \$1.5 million was bequeathed to four different organizations during a memorial luncheon honoring the late Harold Vitalie, a former Marshall County educator who died in 2023. ... Valley Hospice, the Ohio County Public Library and Marshall County Public Library each received \$293,531. The John Marshall High School Scholarship Fund received \$587,063. ... Jennifer Taylor of Valley Hospice described the gift of money as "transformational" for Valley Hospice. Vitalie's mother was taken care of by Valley Hospice before she died.

Clinical News

Terminal cancer: What matters to patients and caregivers

Medscape Medical News; by Megan Brooks; 5/6/24
What's most important to patients with terminal cancer and their caregivers? New research found that patients and caregivers both tend to prioritize

symptom control over life extension but often preferring a balance. Patients and caregivers, however, are less aligned on decisions about cost containment, with patients more likely to prioritize cost containment. ... As patients approached the end of life, neither patients nor caregivers shifted their priorities from life extension to symptom management.

Early-career physicians working temp roles to 'test drive' practice settings, survey finds

Becker's Hospital Review; by Alan Condon; 5/3/24

Physicians and advanced practice providers are opting for the flexibility of temporary, locum tenens work in seek of improved job conditions and to relieve burnout, according to an April 23 survey conducted by AMN Healthcare. AMN, the largest provider of healthcare interim leadership and executive search services in the U.S., asked physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners who recently have worked locum tenens why they do so. The number one reason, according to 86% of respondents, was a better work schedule, followed closely by addressing feelings of burnout (80%).



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Regulatory News

Medicare program suddenly ending leaves seniors in limbo

Newsweek; by Suzanne Blake; 5/6/24

Some hospice patients on Medicare Advantage are now facing uncertainty after the government ended a pilot program. Medicare Advantage is one of the top programs for seniors looking for health insurance, and more than 50 percent of those eligible now use the privatized Medicare Advantage option instead of just traditional Medicare. ... According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, around half of 1.7 million Medicare Advantage recipients who died in 2022 were in hospice for end of life care.

Medicaid disenrollments higher than expected: Report

Becker's Payer Issues; by Rylee Wilson; 5/2/24

The number of people disenrolled from Medicaid through the redeterminations process has surpassed original estimates from the Urban Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. According to a May 2 report, as of November 2023, nearly 9 million people had been disenrolled from Medicaid. The figure came out to 60.5% of the foundation's original estimate of 14.8 million people losing coverage, with several months remaining in the redetermination process. ... The number of people disenrolled varies widely by state and age group.

Star ratings of Leapfrog's 25 straight-'A' and 'F' hospitals

Becker's Hospital Review; by Mackenzie Bean; updated 5/3/24

A comparison of data from CMS and The Leapfrog Group suggests that a hospital's strong performance in one national quality rating system does not necessarily mean it will be a top performer in another. Leapfrog updated its spring safety grades May 1, recognizing 15 hospitals that have received an "A" grade in every consecutive update since 2012. Of these hospitals, only eight received a five-star rating from CMS. Similar discrepancies are seen across Leapfrog's "F" hospitals. While two did receive one star — the lowest possible rating — another five received two stars, and one hospital earned four stars. [Click on the title's link for the list.]



Public Policy News

Wide-ranging health care bill gets final approval from CT House

CT Mirror - Connecticut's Nonprofit Journalism; by Jenna Carlesso; 5/6/24

The House gave final passage Monday to a wide-ranging [health care bill](#) that would add protections for home care workers, boost preparedness for cyberattacks at medical facilities and establish new regulations for the state's health information exchange, among other reforms. ... The sections on additional protections for home care workers were prompted by the murder of visiting nurse Joyce Grayson, who was killed in October while working at a halfway house in Willimantic. ... The bill requires home health aide agencies to

collect certain client information upon intake and make it available to any employee assigned to the client. Information includes a history of violence against health care workers, domestic abuse, substance use, psychiatric history, any listing on a sex offender registry, the crime rate of the municipality the person lives in, and whether there are any weapons or safety hazards in the home. [Click on the title's link for more important information about this bill's safety measures.]

Post-Acute Care News

Georgia system reopens hospital to inpatient services

Hospital CFO Report; by Mariah Taylor; 5/2/24

Piedmont Augusta (GA) is reopening the emergency department and inpatient services at its Summerville campus after converting the location into an outpatient campus over a year ago. Effective May 16, the hospital will open 15 beds in the emergency department, 12 inpatient unit beds, and new imaging services. Outpatient services will continue as normal, according to a May 1 system news release. "What we heard pretty quickly from our community is that they missed the efficiency of that campus," Lily Henson, MD, CEO of Piedmont's Augusta clinical hub, said in the release.

Editor's Note: A recent national trend has been closing emergency departments and inpatient hospital services, especially in rural areas. These closures impact hospice and palliative referrals, community awareness of and access to end-of-life care, and more.

How Mass General Brigham provides emergency care at home

Becker's Health IT; by Giles Bruce; 5/6/24

Somerville, MA-based Mass General Brigham now treats patients needing emergency or urgent care at home. The health system's patients can request referrals to the Home Hospital Emergency Care program through their primary care providers, who decide if patients are stable enough to be treated at home. If they are, a nurse talks to the provider and schedules a home visit, where a paramedic completes a physical exam joined virtually by an emergency medicine physician.

Editor's Note: Pair this solution with related articles in today's newsletter, "[Stranded in the ER, seniors await hospital care and suffer avoidable harm](#)" (in our Post-Acute

Care section), and "[\[Australia\] Palliative patients can die peacefully at home with paramedic support, claims proposed framework](#)" (in our International section).



Stranded in the ER, seniors await hospital care and suffer avoidable harm

KFF Health News; by Judith Graham; 5/6/24

Every day, the scene plays out in hospitals across America: Older men and women lie on gurneys in emergency room corridors moaning or suffering silently as harried medical staff attend to crises. Even when physicians determine these patients need to be admitted to the hospital, they often wait for hours — sometimes more than a day — in the ER in pain and discomfort, not getting enough food or water, not moving around, not being helped to the bathroom, and not getting the kind of care doctors deem necessary.

Editor's Note: Pair this with related solutions in our newsletter today, "[How Mass General Brigham provides emergency care at home](#)" (in our Post-Acute Care section) and "[\[Australia\] Palliative patients can die peacefully at home with paramedic support, claims proposed framework](#)" (in our International section).

He thinks his wife died in an understaffed hospital. Now he's trying to change the industry.

Fortune; by KFF Health News and Kate Wells; 4/19/24

For the past year, police Detective Tim Lillard has spent most of his waking hours unofficially investigating his wife's death. The question has never been exactly how Ann Picha-Lillard died on Nov. 19, 2022: She succumbed to respiratory failure after an infection put too much strain on her weakened lungs. She was 65. For Tim Lillard, the question has been why.

Publisher's Note: We often discuss workforce shortages in terms of staff stress. This

interesting and heartbreaking story explores workforce shortages in terms of patient harm.

Ethics

Keys to addressing ethical, moral distress in pediatric hospice

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/6/24

Hospices may be under-prepared to navigate the complexities in end-of-life decisions among terminally ill children, as the ethical and moral considerations related to patient autonomy are vastly different for pediatric populations compared to adults. Ethical principles of autonomy vary in pediatric populations due to a number of factors, including a child's age, developmental stage, cognitive capacity and their spiritual background and beliefs, according to Christy Torkildson, director at the Children's Hospice and Palliative Care Coalition of California.



General News

6 lessons I learned from inheriting a parent's house

Bankrate; by Linda Bell; 5/3/24

Inheriting a house is a bittersweet, overwhelming experience. I remember receiving the deed that transferred ownership of my mother's home to me and my siblings. I felt a whirlwind of emotions: sadness that my mother was gone, relief that the complicated process was over and trepidation for the enormous responsibilities that lay ahead. Along with those feelings was the compelling need to honor her legacy. Here are six lessons I learned from inheriting my mother's house. ...

1. Discuss estate planning with your parents while you can ...

2. A will should be an evolving document ...
3. Put everything between you and the other heirs in writing ...
4. Plan ahead to avoid probate ...
5. Be prepared for financial surprises ...
6. Inheriting a parent's house means balancing legacy with capability ...

Editor's Note: This article reminds us that while patients and caregivers / family members are dealing with a terminal illness--often--they are also navigating these kinds of decisions, conflicts, and stressors. Bereavement counselors hear the overwhelming chaos that can hijack the person's normal grieving.

Highlighting Nurses Week: Best, worst states for nurses in 2024

Becker's Hospital Review; by Erica Carbajal; 4/30/24

WalletHub has deemed Washington the best state for nurses to practice in 2024 — a recognition based on an analysis of earnings, job growth and working conditions. For the annual ranking, the financial services company compared 50 states across two key dimensions: opportunity and competition, and work environment. Twenty metrics were grouped into those two dimensions, ... Here are the 10 best and worst states for nurses in 2024, per the ranking: ...

27 hospitals, health systems cutting jobs

Becker's Hospital CFO Report; by Kelly Gooch; updated 5/3/24

A number of hospitals and health systems are reducing their workforces or jobs due to financial and operational challenges. Below are workforce reduction efforts or job eliminations announced this year. ...

- Pittsburgh, PA-based UPMC, approximately 1,000 employees ...
- Union Springs, AL-based Bullock County Hospital, 95 employees ...
- Miami, FL-based Jackson Health System, reduced compensation for senior leaders; laid off approximately 25 people; froze vacant positions ...
- Coos Bay, OR-based Bay Area Hospital, 27 positions ...
- Manchester, NH-based Catholic Medical Center plans to cut 142 positions, including 54 layoffs
- Marshfield, WI Clinic Health System will lay off furloughed staff in early May (about 3% of its workforce was furloughed in January)

International News

[Australia] Palliative patients can die peacefully at home with paramedic support, claims proposed framework

Riotack - Australia; by James Day; 5/6/24

A proposed national framework suggests paramedics could help ease pressure on emergency departments by supporting palliative care patients who wish to die at home. Published in the leading international peer reviewed journal [Palliative Medicine](#), the framework seeks to embed palliative care into paramedics' core business and reduce needless transports to hospital. ... Lead author and trained paramedic Dr. Madeleine Juhrmann developed the framework in consultation with paramedics, palliative care doctors, GPs, carers with lived experience and others. The expert group – representing six countries and all the states of Australia – agreed on the framework's 32 service changes to standardise best practice for paramedics delivering palliative care in community-based settings.

Editor's Note: Pair this solution with related articles in today's newsletter, "[Stranded in the ER, seniors await hospital care and suffer avoidable harm](#)" and "[How Mass General Brigham provides emergency care at home](#)" (both are in our "Post-Acute" section).

Today's Encouragement

The character of the nurse is as important as the knowledge s/he possesses. - Carolyn Jarvis

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