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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

May 15th, 2024

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Headlines

[NAHC advocacy scores wins in Congress](#)

NAHC Newsroom; Press Release; 5/10/24

Tireless advocacy by the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) and our partners at the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, has resulted in the approval of the [Preserving Telehealth, Hospital, and Ambulance Access Act](#) (H.R. 8261) through the Ways & Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. While the committee advanced the legislation, it will still need to be passed by the full House of Representatives and the Senate as well. This first step was crucial to get the bill on the pathway to its ultimate enactment into law. This legislation provides:

- a two-year extension for removal of geographic and originating site restrictions, allowing for the face-to-face home health certification to be accomplished with telehealth,
- a two-year extension of the hospice re-certification with workable guardrails,
- a five-year extension of the hospital at home program, and
- a mandate for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to collect face-to-face visit data.

Editor's Note: Yesterday (5/14/24), we published a similar [press release from NHPCO](#). This NAHC article provides specific information about what the legislation provides.

[AHA, H-ISAC warn hospitals about Black Basta following Ascension cyberattack](#)

Healthcare IT News; by Andrea Fox; 5/13/24

Meanwhile, staff at the health system say they don't have patient orders and can't page doctors. As it works to restore clinical systems, Ascension says it's working with law enforcement and sharing threat intelligence to help prevent similar attacks. The Health Information Sharing and Analysis Center issued a [threat alert](#) Friday about the Russia-backed ransomware group Black Basta, warning of its accelerated attempted attacks against the healthcare sector. Prompted by H-ISAC, the American Hospital Association also sent a cybersecurity advisory with technical mitigation recommendations to its members. ... [Click on the title's link for more.]

Hospice Provider News

[Hospice remains underserved by Medicare Advantage, data shows](#)

BioMedWire; 5/13/24

While the Medicare Advantage space grows bigger, it is difficult for regulators and the medical industry to decide how best to integrate hospice into MA programs. This is a major concern because hospice care is the only segment of the healthcare sector that isn't catered for in Medicare Advantage (MA). ... Almost 50% of all individuals (1.7 million) on MA programs that succumbed to their terminal illnesses in 2022 were recipients of hospice services. ...



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[Potential progress at Optum Tri-State complicated by corporate care crisis: 'It's bonuses for bodies'](#)

The Examiner News; by Adam Stone; 5/13/24

'It's Bonuses for Bodies'

This is the 16th installment in an investigative [series](#), launched in December 2022, about CareMount/Optum/UnitedHealth and broader concerns about

corporate medical care. ... I know this piece is a long ride to the larger point but buckle up and pretend you're reading a few book chapters instead of a newspaper column, because all of the context matters, and interconnects. ...

- 'Preferably on Hospice': ... the group would give bonuses to medical professionals linked to end-of-life care.
- "It's bonuses for bodies," a medical staffer told me ...
- 'Palliative Pathway': Insiders said the unsettling reality of financially-incentivized patient care features coercive company tactics, subjective criteria for hospice qualification and attempts to rebrand the bonuses as a palliative care incentive, all under the implied threat of professional retaliation for staff who don't comply.

Clinical News

Nurse practitioners improve skilled nursing's dementia care outcomes, but regulatory barriers remain: study

McKnights Long-Term Care News; by Josh Henreckson; 5/13/24

[Nurse practitioners'] NPs' involvement can significantly improve end-of-life care outcomes for residents with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), according to the results of a new study in *JAMA Health Forum*. ... Those benefits, however, were shrunk by state regulations on the scope of care NPs are allowed to provide. ... Elizabeth White, PhD, assistant professor of health services, policy and practice at Brown University [describes,] "For example, when a state restricts NPs from signing Do Not Resuscitate orders, that can serve as a barrier to advance care planning and could contribute to unnecessary hospitalizations at the end of life."

Editor's Note: We posted this JAMA Health Forum article on 5/13/24: [Nurse Practitioner care, scope of practice, and end-of-life outcomes for nursing home residents with dementia.](#)

"Mental wellbeing is as important as physical wellbeing – both are interconnected"

Marie Curie Hospice; by Anne Finucane, Marie Curie Senior Research Fellow, and David Gillanders, Senior Lecturer, Clinical Psychology, The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom; 5/13/24

At least one in every four people living with a terminal diagnosis will

experience depression, anxiety, adjustment disorder or low mood. Many more will experience distress because of deteriorating health and related uncertainty. Feelings of hopelessness, discouragement and even a desire for hastened death can occur. People have reported that psychological support helps them develop better coping strategies, helps them be more open to their situation and improves communication with their families and those involved in their care.

Editor's Note: Executive leaders, what value do you give to your interdisciplinary team members and their contributions to patients' mental/emotional care? What advocacy, support and recognition do you have for your social workers, chaplains, counselors? What mental wellbeing measures do your employees experience throughout your organization--and more directly--from your leadership with them? Perhaps it's time to "take the pulse" of your culture's mental wellbeing.



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Regulatory News

CMS extends Medicaid waivers to 2025

Becker's Payer Issues; by Rylee Wilson; 5/13/24

CMS will [extend](#) flexibilities designed to help states keep more eligible individuals enrolled in Medicaid through June 2025. The waivers, previously set to expire at the end of 2024, will be extended for six more months, Daniel Tsai, deputy CMS administrator and director of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP services, wrote in a May 9 memo to states. Nearly all states were expected to complete the unwinding process by June 2024, Mr. Tsai wrote, but because several states took extension waivers from CMS, several states will continue renewals past June.

Mergers & Acquisition News

Medicaid 80/20 rule could drive surge in home care deals

Modern Healthcare; by Diane Eastabrook; 4/10/24

Private equity firms and large home care companies could soon be going head to head to buy smaller personal care operators expected to exit the industry

because of a new regulation. The potential for industry consolidation stems from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services rule that will require home care companies to spend 80% of Medicaid reimbursements on caregiver wages. Mergers and acquisitions advisers predict the so-called 80/20 rule, [finalized April 22](#), could prompt many smaller operators to sell.

Post-Acute Care News

[Hospital CEOs ask patients to receive care at home](#)

Becker's Hospital Review; by Madeline Ashley; 5/14/24

Hospital executives are making the push to move more care, specifically recovery rooms and exams, out of the hospital and into patient homes, to potentially save money and improve finances as the country continues to move out of the pandemic, [Politico](#) reported May 11. And Congress is supporting these efforts by introducing legislation that would expand at-home care and to allow Medicare to continue funding telehealth. Here are five findings from the report: ... [Click on the title's link to read more.]



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Technology / Innovations News

[Have EHRs been good for healthcare?](#)

Becker's Health IT; by Giles Bruce; 5/3/24

Fifteen years after meaningful use incentives propelled the shift to EHRs, health system leaders told *Becker's* that digitizing medical records has been a net positive for the industry — with some caveats. "Regardless of your position, there is no doubt that EHRs have changed the face of healthcare," said Sandra Hales, associate vice president for IT clinical applications at Phoenix-based Banner Health. "Patients now have timely access to records and data that is simplified for understanding, and there's a level of inclusivity and responsibility for patients to engage in their own care."

Upskilling and retraining for talent innovation in the AI era

Tech Trends Post; 5/13/24

According to a report from the IBM Institute for Business Value, more than 60% of executives say generative AI will disrupt the way their organizations design customer and employee experiences. Employees must change to meet these demands. Many are turning to AI upskilling – the act of providing the workforce with the skills and training to use AI to do their jobs. ... A 2024 Gallup poll found that about 25% of workers worry that their jobs could become obsolete due to AI. ... [This article outlines the following:]

- Upskilling and reskilling ...
- Opportunities to advance AI skills across sectors and industries ...
- How AI enhances upskilling opportunities ...
- Why AI advancements provide added value to your organization ...

6 ways to cut EHR burdens for physicians

AMA - American Medical Association; by Sara Berg, MS; 5/7/24

When Jane F. Fogg, MD, MPH, first became a doctor, patient charts were on paper. She looked forward to the rise of the EHR, believing electronic charting could help modernize the care she provided while also empowering herself and her patients. Funny how things turn out. “EHRs are a source of burnout—we have lots and lots of great evidence that has helped us understand the low usability and the high work burden that it adds to physicians,” Dr. Fogg, senior physician adviser at the AMA. ... Here are just a few ways that health systems and organizations can improve EHR workflows to reduce physician burden.

1. Identify the pain points ...
2. Ask the "why" of the current state ...
3. Prioritize the work ...
4. Change the EHR inbox workflow ...
5. Eliminate, automate, delegate and collaborate ...
6. Remove items that don't add value ...



General News

Maryland becomes sixth state to require salary, wage disclosures in job listings

McKnights Senior Living; by Kathleen Steele Gaivin; 5/10/24

Maryland soon will join five other states and the Washington, DC, in requiring employers to disclose salary or wage ranges upfront in job listings. Maryland's requirement goes into effect Oct. 1. The states of California, Colorado, Hawaii, New York and Washington have similar laws in place, with the requirement expected to go into effect in the nation's capital, on June 30. ... After a first violation, the employer will receive a warning. Fines for noncompliance range then will range from \$300 for the second violation to \$600 for subsequent violations.

Beyond medicine: 'Being Mortal' challenges healthcare's approach to death and dying

SwiftTelecast; by Shawn Butlere; 5/11/24

This video from the "Frontline" series, titled "Being Mortal," follows Dr. Atul Gawande as he explores the complex relationships between doctors, patients, and end-of-life decisions. Based on his best-selling book "Being Mortal," Gawande discusses how medical training often falls short in preparing doctors for the realities of death and dying. The documentary highlights personal stories, including Gawande's own experiences with his father's illness and death, to illustrate the challenges in balancing hope with realistic outcomes and the importance of quality life in the face of terminal illness.

800+ California nurses to receive 22.5% pay hike

Becker's Hospital Review; by Kelly Gooch; 5/10/24

Members of the California Nurses Association have [approved](#) a new labor contract with Washington Hospital Healthcare System in Fremont, Calif. The four-year agreement covers roughly 840 nurses, according to a union news release. It was approved by union members May 3 and by the Washington Township Health Care District board of directors May 8. ... According to the CNA, the new deal includes a 22.5% across-the-board increase in wages over four years. It also includes "precedent-setting standard expanding infectious disease protocols and workplace violence protections"; language that protects union members' ability to take meal and rest periods; and protections for part-time positions, according to the union.

Editor's Note: These new terms reflect nationwide trends of healthcare/nurse strikes and reasons for leaving their jobs, ie., pay, patient safety, workplace violence, work/home life balance, and more.



California to redirect more than \$7B in healthcare funding

Becker's Hospital CFO Report; by Mackenzie Bean; 5/13/24

California is seeking to divert more than \$7 billion in funding from the healthcare sector to address a major funding deficit, according to a revised budget proposal [released](#) May 10. Gov. Gavin Newsom has proposed reallocating \$6.7 billion from Medi-Cal provider rate increases planned for Jan. 1, 2025, to balance the state budget. This funding was generated by the managed care organization tax created last year. ... The proposed budget would also cut funding for healthcare workforce initiatives by \$854.6 million through 2028. Funding for public health and various behavioral health programs would also be reduced.

St Oswald's Hospice launches 'emotional' portraits exhibition highlighting end-of-life care

Chronicle Live, United Kingdom; by Sam Volpe; 5/11/24

An emotional new exhibition has opened highlighting "the bond that doesn't die" when a loved one dies and promoting the care offered by St Oswald's Hospice. Entitled Portraits with Purpose: Continuing Bonds, and created by Fenham artist Leanne Pearce, the exhibition features twelve portraits of people who have received or are receiving palliative and end-of-life care at St Oswald's. Leanne has created the artwork working closely with the families - who have experienced care and support from the charity at the most difficult of times.

Today's Encouragement

Failure is not the opposite of success: it's part of success. — Arianna Huffington, businesswoman

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