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HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE TODAY

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Headlines

Arden Home Health & Hospice acquires Mid-Delta Home Health, solidifying its coverage footprint to over 90% of Mississippi

NewsWire, Hattiesburg, Miss.; 5/14/24

Arden Hospice is proud to announce its recent acquisition of Mid-Delta Home Health, a 40+ year family-owned, Mississippi business covering predominantly the Mississippi Delta and surrounding areas. As of May 1, 2024, Arden is now the largest home health and hospice company that is proudly owned, headquartered, and operating in the State of Mississippi.

Hospice Provider News

End of life outcomes following Comfort Care Orders: A single center experience

The American Journal of Hospice & Palliative Care; by Matthew Tucker, Dayna Hovern, John Liantonion, Elizabeth Collins, Adam F Binder; 5/13/24

Conclusions: The majority of patients placed on comfort care died during their hospitalization demonstrating a real need for comprehensive end of life care and immediate hospice services. For those discharged with hospice services, they spent an excessive amount of time in the hospital waiting for services to be arranged.

Editor's Note: Re-read the previous sentence: "For those discharged with hospice services, they spent an excessive amount of time in the hospital waiting for services to be arranged." Does this happen with your hospice admissions? What improvements can you create?

Nurses' Union reaches labor agreement with PeaceHealth for hospice, home health workers

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 5/14/24

After more than a year of negotiations, the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA)

labor union has reached an agreement with PeaceHealth. Priorities among the hospice and home nurses include wage increases, raising safety standards, ensuring affordable and accessible home health care delivery, equitable pay protection and addressing clinical staffing crises by increasing recruitment and retention of skilled caregivers.

Care Synergy appoints Dr. Pradeep Rai as Chief Medical Officer

Care Synergy Network; 5/13/24

Care Synergy announced the selection of Dr. Pradeep Rai, MD, as the company's chief medical officer. Additionally, Dr. Rai will serve as The Denver Hospice's (TDH) medical director as well. As Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Rai will lead clinical operations across all of Care Synergy's hospice, palliative care, and home health affiliates. These affiliates include The Denver Hospice, Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care in Colorado Springs, Pathways Hospice in Fort Collins, and the Colorado Visting Nurses Association (C VNA) which serves patients across the Front Range. He will also spearhead medical operations for Colorado PACE upon its anticipated Q4 2024 launch.

Golf tournament raises more than \$16k for hospice

The Villages Daily Sun (FL); by James Dinan; 5/13/24

The Women's Guild at St. George Episcopal Church in The Villages was determined to raise lots of money for Cornerstone Hospice on May 2 through its annual Peg Busch Ladies Golf Scramble. By the time all was said and done, the guild went beyond even what its leaders expected. "We were hoping to crack the \$10,000 mark for the first time," said Dale Dreps, who helped organize this year's tournament. "But we managed to raise \$16,150 for Cornerstone Hospice this year. We couldn't believe it." ... That is more than a 336% increase in just three years.

Editor's Note: Congratulations, Cornerstone Hospice! What great stats!

Palliative Care Provider News

Comprehensive Care in South Valparaiso: Clinical bridges urgent and palliative needs

ABNewsWire; 5/14/24

... South Valparaiso – Immediate & Urgent Care Clinic's expansion into palliative care signifies a positive step towards a more comprehensive healthcare

landscape in South Valparaiso. Here's a look at some potential implications of this development:

- Improved Access to Care ...
- Enhanced Continuity of Care ...
- Increased Awareness of Palliative Care ...
- Looking Ahead: A Focus on Community Engagement ...
- Collaboration with Local Providers ...
- Support Group Development ...

Clinical News

Early palliative care perceptions by patients with cancer and primary caregivers: metaphorical language

BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care; by Elena Bandieri, Sarah Bigi, Melissa Nava, Eleonora Borelli, Carlo Adolfo Porro, Erio Castellucci, Fabio Efficace, Eduardo Bruera, Oreofe Odejide, Camilla Zimmermann, Leonardo Potenza, Mario Luppi; 5/13/24

Methods: Data were collected through a pen-and-paper questionnaire on respondents' perceptions of the disease, its treatment and their idea of death, before and after receiving EPC [early palliative care]. The data were analysed by identifying all metaphorical uses of language, following the 'metaphor identification procedure' proposed by the Pragglaz Group.

Results: Metaphors were used from a variety of semantic fields. EPC was described using spiritual terms, to indicate that this approach was instrumental in 'restoring life', 'producing hope' and making patients feel 'accompanied'. The most recurrent metaphors were those referring to light and salvation; spatial metaphors were used to describe the treatment and the hospital as a 'safe haven' and 'an oasis of peace'.

Musician grants dying wish to hospice patient

The Platte County Citizen; by Rimsie McConiga; 5/14/24

Jazz musician Stanton Kessler was surprised when he was contacted recently by his friend, a hospice nurse, who reached out to him with an unusual request. A patient at the Kansas City hospice where she works told her his last wish would be to hear his favorite song, 'Feels So Good' before he died. During their conversations Kessler's impression was that this was his friend's first experience

with a request such as this. "There was an element of urgency," Kessler said. "She said he was near death." ... An incredibly emotional and rewarding moment followed when Kessler began to play the patient's beloved song. The man's eyes remained closed, but his fingers began to move. ...

Editor's Note: For research-based, hospice clinical stories, and rich music metaphors for ways to use music with the dying and bereaved, examine the book, [Music of the Soul, Chapter 7 "The Final Cadence,"](#) in Routledge's international Series in Death, Dying, and Bereavement (series edited Robert A. Neimeyer), authored by Joy S. Berger, DMA, FT, BCC, MT-BC (editor for this newsletter).

End-of-life doulas' growing value proposition in hospice

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/14/24

Hospices and other health care providers are increasingly recognizing the value proposition of end-of-life doulas. Organizations are taking varied routes to leverage doula's skills to improve quality. End-of-life doulas support patients and their families in a number of broad and diverse ways, according to Erin Collins, program director of The Peaceful Presence Project. Collins is also a certified hospice and palliative care nurse and end-of-life doula. She serves as vice-chair of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's (NHPCO) End-of-Life Doula Advisory Council.

Editor's Note: Caution. What training, professional experience, credentials, referrals, and other qualifications does the individual, end-of-life care doula bring? Not bring? What gaps in your services (for which a doula might be called) indicate that your organization needs to "step up" your community education, caregiver/family resources, psychosocial support, and volunteer presence?

When families fight over a relative with dementia, it's time to call in the mediator

The New York Times; by Paula Span; 5/13/24

Trained negotiators can help families struggling with vexing elder-care issues. The four adult children were in agreement. Their father, William Curry, a retired electrical engineer and business executive, was sinking deeper into dementia. ... [But their mother] remained determined to continue caring for her 81-year-old husband at home, despite the increasing toll on her own health. ... As the weeks passed, "we were really at an impasse," [a daughter] said. "Do you override your mother?" ... [Increasingly,] families seek elder mediation privately,

before disputes land in court and imperil or destroy family relationships. [Continue reading for descriptions of how mediation differs from arbitration, from family therapy, and for cautions about this being "a fairly new field with no nationwide certification or licensing requirements."]

Editor's Notes: Executive leaders, what community education and resources are you providing for Advance Directives? What family systems education and and problem-solving are you providing for your interdisciplinary team members and grief counselors? Family conflicts are inherent--in some form or fashion--with almost anyone needing dementia care, especially when paired with palliative or hospice care. (If in doubt, ask your seasoned, front-line professionals.)

Manatee County hospice volunteer celebrates patients' birthdays dressed in costumes

Specturm News 9, Manatee County, FL; by Rick Elmhorst; 5/13/24

A Manatee County woman is bringing joy to people in hospice care by celebrating their birthdays. Pam Freas volunteers with Chapters Health Lifepath Hospice by dressing in costumes and visiting patients for their birthdays. She also helps manage the supplies for milestone birthday celebrations, including packing birthday bags full of blankets and pillows. Freas recently visited a young boy named Jackson who was in home hospice care. She dressed as a dinosaur since Jackson loves dinosaurs. Although Jackson has a difficult time communicating, Freas spent time talking with him to brighten his day.

Industry professionals reflect on five years of medical marijuana in Arkansas

Arkansas Advocate; by Mary Hennigan; 5/13/24

Since the launch of medical marijuana in Arkansas in 2019, more than three dozen storefronts have opened, at least 102,000 residents have registered for patient cards and revenue has topped \$1.1 billion. The latest card count exceeds 102,000, and there's no indication of a letup in new applications, ... As of June 2023, one in three Arkansans with a patient card listed post-traumatic stress disorder as their qualifying condition, ... The next highest qualifying condition was intractable pain, or pain that has not responded to ordinary medications for more than six months, at nearly 30%.

Regulatory News

Medicare Advantage will 'sink' rural hospitals, experts warn

Modern Healthcare; by Michael Mcauliff; 5/14/24

Rural hospitals, which tend to run on thinner operating margins than metro-area hospitals, have been hurt by reimbursement cuts, staffing constraints, inflation, the aging population and interest rate hikes. ... Studies by Chartis [Center for Rural Health] and others paint the bleak picture for rural hospitals. According to a recent estimate by the nonprofit Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform, about 700 rural hospitals are at risk of closing. A recent Chartis report estimated 167 rural hospitals have closed since 2010, with another 418 vulnerable to closure now. [Click on the title's link for patient care examples and more stats.]

Humana, Aetna likely to lose Medicare Advantage members

Modern Healthcare; by Nona Tepper and Lauren Berryman; 5/14/24

Industry heavyweights CVS Health Aetna and Humana foresee Medicare Advantage membership losses next year. Anticipated changes to health plan offerings and benefit design to achieve long-term business profitability could mean losing a significant portion of their Medicare Advantage membership, executives told investors at the Bank of America Securities Healthcare Conference on Tuesday. ... Headed into next year, Aetna may adjust benefits, tighten its prior authorization policies, reassess its provider networks and exit markets, CVS Health Chief Financial Officer Tom Cowhey told investors. ... [Humana Chief Financial Officer Susan Diamond] anticipates losing about 5% of its 6.1 million Medicare Advantage members, ... Conversely, UnitedHealth Group's UnitedHealthcare insurance business appears to be better positioned for growth heading into 2025 ... , executives said. UnitedHealth Group CEO Andrew Witty said, ... "The thing we don't want is unsustainable ups and downs in our performance in any particular regard. ... You should just expect more of the same from us in terms of what we're doing."

Technology / Innovations News

Amazon seeks nonprofit healthcare, EHR expertise

Becker's Health IT; by Laura Dyrda; 5/13/24

Amazon is looking to hire leaders with experience in nonprofit healthcare and EHRs, according to recent job postings on the tech giant's website. Amazon Web

Services has a [listing](#) for "Senior Solutions Architect, Healthcare, Nonprofit Health, Nonprofit Healthcare" seeking an individual with a passion for helping nonprofit healthcare providers implement cloud computing solutions. ... [Amazon] is also [hiring](#) for an account executive focused on nonprofit healthcare and global nonprofit healthcare. The company is searching for a "proven business executive in the NP healthcare sector to lead and continue to expand the business with some of our most important healthcare customers and develop new customers across a targeted greenfield market."

Making AI actionable in healthcare - a high-level guide

Becker's Hospital Review; by Calum Yacoubian, MD, Director Healthcare AI Strategy, IQVIA; 5/14/24

Never has there been more interest and excitement around the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare. The advent of Generative AI and LLMs, popularized by OpenAI with ChatGPT, has opened many people's eyes to what might be possible. Yet, the translation of this promise to patient impact is only in its infancy, and while it is a path with huge potential, as healthcare professionals, we must tread carefully and responsibly. In this article, we discuss the importance of the ecosystem in which healthcare AI must exist, to be successful. That ecosystem is made up of people, process, and technology.

1. People: The Right Stakeholders ...
2. Process: Integration and Workflow ...
3. Technology: the AI ...

General News

5 tips to support employees with unexpected illness or disability

Forbes; by Diane Winiarski; 5/14/24

When employees experience an unexpected illness or a disabling condition, it can be traumatic for them and unsettling for their managers. It is important for employers to demonstrate support and an understanding of each situation. Another way to show support is by pointing them to the federal disability program created to help in this specific instance. ... These five suggestions can help managers be better equipped to support their team members who are dealing with illnesses, accidents or disabilities.

1. Be Compassionate and Listen ...
2. Cross-train Your Team ...
3. Maximize Benefits ...
4. Stay Informed About the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) ...
5. Offer Reasonable Accommodations ...

Today's Encouragement

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new. — Socrates, philosopher

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