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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

May 21st, 2024

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Headlines

[A south St. Louis County hospice house offers patients alternative for end-of-life care](#)

[MO] KMOV St. Louis / YouTube; 5/19/24

Publisher's Note: Fantastic TV coverage of hospice and the Mercy Hospice South - de Greeff Hospice House.

Hospice Provider News

[98-year-old Marine veteran in hospice care finally receives his high school diploma](#)

[MD] WJLA; by Jay Korff; 5/18/24

A nearly 100-year-old Marine veteran in hospice Friday was hand-delivered the high school diploma he never received. 98-year-old Richard Remp was unable to get his diploma back in the 1940s because he dropped out at age 17 to serve in World War II, then Korea, and then Vietnam. But he savored the remarkable moment Friday.

Palliative Care Provider News

[New palliative care nonprofit encourages open, candid conversations about death, dying](#)

[NC] ABC 13 News; by Kimberly King; 5/16/24

Swannanoa, NC (WLOS) - There's a national movement among a segment of palliative and hospice care workers to help people facing a terminal illness find

the strength to have more candid conversations around death. The goal is to ease the final days not only for the individual dying but for their loved ones at a most painful time. Dr. Aditi Sethi, a physician specializing in hospice and palliative care, founded the nonprofit [Center for Conscious Living and Dying \(CCLD\)](#) based in Swannanoa. Sethi's work focuses on helping people come to terms with mortality and break the stigma of avoiding the hard conversations about it.



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Clinical News

Nurse resilience, decompression off balance: Press Ganey

Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Erica Carbajal; 5/14/24

Nurses have a hard time disconnecting from work, and may benefit from additional workplace resources that support them in doing so, according to findings from a new Press Ganey report on nurse resiliency. ... Below are four key findings from the [report](#):

1. Nurses demonstrate strong resilience, but struggle to decompress.
2. Resilience - which the report defines as the ability to recover from or adjust easily to change — varies by generation, gender.
3. Nearly 30% of nurses believe their organization doesn't consistently show them respect...
4. Decompression huddles are a strategy to build resilience and foster collaboration.

Biden announces 'major step' toward reclassifying marijuana

The Hill; by Joseph Choi; 5/16/24

The Biden administration announced Thursday it had initiated the formal rulemaking process to reschedule marijuana to Schedule III from its Schedule I designation that it has held for more than 50 years. [CBS website maps states where marijuana is legal for recreational and / or medical use.](#)

Regulatory News

Owner of home health services agency and parent of disabled child arrested for Medicaid provider fraud

FL Office of the Attorney General; 5/15/24

Tallahassee, FL - Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit announced the arrest of the owner of a home health services agency and a parent of a disabled child for Medicaid provider fraud. Latrena Marie Thomas is the owner of A River's Journey, a home health care agency with residential home care facilities located in Yulee and Jacksonville. Thomas is accused of hiring non-licensed individuals to provide hands-on personal care services to Medicaid recipients. In addition, Thomas paid Donald Ray Adams II, a parent of a disabled Medicaid recipient, to provide medically licensed care for his own child. In total, Thomas fraudulently billed Medicaid claims for 30 distinct medically needy Medicaid recipients, which caused a total loss of more than \$1.6 million.



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Compliance strategies for forthcoming hospice HOPE tool

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/16/24

Hospices will have a learning curve when it comes to implementing the Hospice Outcomes and Patient Evaluation Tool (HOPE) tool. The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is currently developing quality measures that will be included in the HOPE tool, which will replace the current Hospice Item Set (HIS). After years of development, the agency in its recent hospice proposed rule indicated that the HOPE tool's implementation would begin in 2025.

Notable Mentions: Jennifer Kennedy, CHAP; Kimberly Skehan, CHAP.

Hospice owner sentenced to 240 months imprisonment and ordered to repay \$42,000,000 for defrauding Medicare

Department of Justice; 5/16/24

New Orleans - U.S. Attorney Duane A. Evans announced that on May 15, 2024,

U.S. District Judge Lance Africk sentenced SHIVA AKULA (“AKULA”), age 68, of New Orleans, to 240 months of imprisonment, three years of supervised release and \$2,300 in mandatory special assessment fees, in relation to an extensive health care fraud scheme orchestrated by AKULA. In November 2023, a federal jury convicted AKULA of all 23 counts of his underlying indictment. AKULA owned and oversaw the day-to-day operations of Canon Healthcare, LLC, a hospice facility with offices in the New Orleans area, Baton Rouge, Covington, and Gulfport, Mississippi. At sentencing, the Court found that between January 2013 and December 2019, Canon billed Medicare approximately \$84 million in fraudulent claims and was paid approximately \$42 million relating to these fraudulent claims. The Court ordered that AKULA repay the \$42 million of fraudulent proceeds back to Medicare.

Public Policy News

Senate kills bill allowing medical aid in dying

[NH] Concord Monitor; by Sruthi Gopalakrishnan; 5/16/24

After months of intense public debate, with Granite Staters on both sides of the legislation that would allow medical aid in dying, packing the room at every public hearing, the Senate voted on Thursday to kill the bill.



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Mergers & Acquisition News

Optum spent \$31B on acquisitions in 2 years

Becker's Health IT; by Naomi Diaz; 5/13/24

In the last two years, Optum has spent \$31 billion on acquisitions, The Oregonian reported May 13. In the state of Oregon, Optum has acquired 12 healthcare provider companies including Oregon Medical Group, GreenField Health System, Family Medical Group Northeast as well as an independent physician association in Portland. ... This comes as Optum is currently pursuing authorization to acquire Amedisys, a home health care firm, for \$3.3 billion.

What healthcare REITs mean for providers, patients

Modern Healthcare; by Hayley DeSilva; 5/14/24

Steward Health Care's Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing is the latest example of the significant role real estate investment trusts play in healthcare. REITs have served as a financial solution for providers and health systems, allowing them to broaden their networks without as hefty a capital investment. Steward, for example, is the largest tenant of Medical Properties Trust, which bought Steward's real estate assets in 2016. The REIT, which also owns 10% of Steward, has approved \$75 million in debtor-in-possession financing to help Steward maintain patient care while looking for operators for its hospitals.

Post-Acute Care News

Leaders leave patients in PE hospital shell game

Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Molly Gamble (Twitter); 5/16/24

A bankrupt hospital that remains open is - in some ways - just as worrisome for patients as if it closed. The demise of Dallas-based Steward Healthcare is the latest example of this, and a stark reminder that watchdogs for patients only safeguard their interests up until a certain point. The situation is now a shell game for patients, who might have Steward hospitals open and available to them, but with questionable levels of staffing, safety or timely access to essential services.



Home care providers need to step up worker safety initiatives, experts say

McKnight's Home Care; by Adam Healy; 5/14/24

In the aftermath of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's citing of Elara Caring for failing to protect a worker killed on the job, safety and legal experts are urging providers to be proactive about implementing worker safety practices. "We have been seeing a rather significant uptick in workplace violence issues in the home-based care industry," Angelo Spinola, an attorney at Polsinelli, told McKnight's Home Care Daily Pulse, in a statement. "We highly recommend that providers take proactive steps to implement home-based care specific policies and procedures and conduct workplace trainings that address common issues such as what to do if a client is acting erratically, how to report unsafe conditions in the home [such as an unsecured firearm], de-escalation techniques, etc."

General News

Recognizing the physical and emotional toll that caring for a loved one with a chronic condition has on the caregiver

Medical Xpress; by American Heart Association; 5/15/24

Living with a chronic medical condition after surviving a heart attack or stroke may come with additional health and personal care needs. Often survivors must rely on a family member or close friend to help. However, there's a growing body of scientific research that shows people who serve as unpaid caregivers may not be getting the care they need to live longer, healthier lives, according to the American Heart Association...

Today's Encouragement

A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination.
~Nelson Mandela



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