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TODAY**

May 27th, 2024

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Headlines

[Avow honors local veterans at 8th Annual Armed Forces Celebration](#)

Avow Cares; Press Release; 5/23/24

Local Veterans from various branches of the military convened at Avow's 8th Annual Armed Forces Celebration. The event, held on May 17 provided a tribute to those who have served or are currently serving our nation with valor and sacrifice. ... This annual celebration not only serves as a day of deep respect and gratitude but also as a crucial part of Avow's ongoing commitment to recognizing the heroic service of our Veterans. Throughout the year, Avow distributes approximately 2,000 pins to honor veterans for their service. ... Avow is a Level 5 Partner with We Honor Veterans, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) in collaboration with the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). In 2023, nearly 25% of all hospice patients admitted to Avow were identified as Veterans.

[Health equity: Insights on the CMS Framework and Leadership in Healthcare](#)

CHAPcast [podcast]; by CHAP and Marisette Hassan; 5/23/24

As a nurse, witnessing the pervasive disparities in healthcare access was a profound wake-up call. Our conversation with Marisette Hassan takes us on a journey through the challenges and aspirations of achieving health equity, a mission that has never been more critical than in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. When systems fail to serve everyone equally, the consequences are dire, and our discussion underlines the urgency of this issue. With Marisette's insights on the CMS health equity framework, we unpack the layers of this complex issue, from the importance of data collection to the necessity of culturally tailored services.

Hospice Provider News

Healthcare sees highest Chapter 11 bankruptcy filings in 15 years: report

McKnights Senior Living; by Kathleen Steele Gaivin; 5/20/24

Chapter 11 bankruptcies in healthcare, including senior living reached a multiyear high in the first quarter of 2024. That's according to the newest Polsinelli-TrBK Distress Indices Report, published Wednesday. "We continue to see intense stress in senior living," Jeremy R. Johnson, a bankruptcy and restructuring attorney at Polsinelli and co-author of the report, said in a press release issued in conjunction with the report. ... The Southeast continues to outpace the rest of the country as the busiest region for bankruptcy filings, according to the report. The Southeast region reported 33.4% of the filings in the first quarter, followed by Northeast and Delaware at 30.8% and 16.1%, respectively. Since the benchmark period of 2020, the Northeast has shown the biggest increase in filings.



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Legacy society honors ardent supporters of Blue Ridge Hospice

The Winchester Star; by Brian Brehm; 5/21/24

Blue Ridge Hospice holds its cofounder in such high esteem, it has created a legacy society and named it in her honor. The new Helen Zebarth Legacy Society aims to honor Zebarth's vision, inspire philanthropy and ensure the continuity of compassionate end-of-life care for generations to come, according to a media release from Blue Ridge Hospice in Winchester. Blue Ridge Hospice was formed after Zebarth visited England while her husband, Roger, was stationed in Europe on a military assignment in the 1970s. When the Zebarths returned to the United States in the late 1970s, Helen Zebarth, a former nurse at Winchester Memorial Hospital, got in touch with the hospital's CEO, George Caley, and told him they needed to start a local hospice.

Editor's Note: May we learn from Blue Ridge Hospice. On this day of remembering, we thank those whose vision and perseverance for "hospice care" carved out new paths

for better living, dying, moments of death, and bereavement. Who were those pioneers for your hospice? How do you remember their legacies?

Hospice of the Chesapeake celebrates 45 years at event, raising \$500k

The Baynet; by Hospice of the Chesapeake; 5/23/24

Around 300 guests mixed and mingled at the Fluegel Alumni Center to celebrate Hospice of the Chesapeake's history of caring for life at its 45th Anniversary Celebration on May 11. The event raised \$500,000 to support the organization's hospice, supportive and grief care programs and services provided to patients and families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties.

Palliative Care Provider News

Transformative peer connections: Early experiences from the ASCO Palliative Care Community of Practice

American Society of Clinical Oncology; by Mazie Tsang, Cristiane Bergerot, Natasha Dhawan, Rushil Patel, Darcy Burbage, Tingting Zhang, Jafar Al-Mondhiry, Joseph McCollom, Ramy Sedhom; 5/22/24 online ahead of print in June 2024

... there are barriers to implementing palliative oncology at many institutions for myriad reasons. ... In this article, we discuss an innovative strategy that ASCO implemented called the Communities of Practice (CoP). We share our experiences as the Palliative Care CoP and how our group seeks to develop processes and structures to collectively promote systemic change and enhance palliative care delivery for people with cancer. Our Palliative Care CoP engages with senior leaders, administrators, and those in power to achieve a shared vision of delivering holistic health care for people with serious illness. ... [We address] eight main domains:

1. increasing palliative care education and resources;
2. creating opportunities for global palliative care research;
3. providing peer mentorship and community building;
4. engaging with patient advocates;
5. supporting and developing interdisciplinary teams;
6. assisting with professional development and identity formation, especially for trainees and early career faculty;
7. extending our outreach through social media; and
8. enhancing the clinical practice of palliative oncology

Clinical News

Church group fashions 'dignity quilts' for palliative care unit

Canada - Local Journalism Initiative; by Wayne Doyle; 5/22/24

It's such a simple thing. But the volume of respect it signifies is unimaginable. The impact it has on surviving family members, equally so. It's called 'code dove' and it's a special paging phrase; ... staff and residents join the family of the deceased as they gather at the front entrance to say goodbye as the resident leaves the home for the last time. "When our residents are leaving, they exit through the front lobby, the same way they came in," said Peggy Sauve, assistant director of resident care at the IOOF on Brooks Street in Barrie. "It's all about respect for the individual and their family. "We hold flameless candles, play their favourite music and take one last chance to say goodbye," she added. ... As the resident leaves the home for the last time, their body is covered with a dignity quilt, designed and handmade by members of the Elmvale Presbyterian Church Craft group.

Editor's Note: While this Canadian article refers to a "palliative care unit," in the US these practices are most likely to be replicated in a residential hospice house.

Public Policy News

Experts urge Legislature to pass bill preventing for-profit and private equity hospice in New York

Spectrum News 1; by Susan Arbetter; 5/21/24

The FBI has issued public warnings about hospice fraud in four states — Texas, Arizona, Nevada and California. The bureau is alerting consumers to a widespread scam in which patients are enrolled in hospice without their knowledge by recruiters who "sell" hospice care to people who aren't actually eligible.

... One reason fraudsters have yet to gain a foothold in New York is that new hospices here go through a "Certificate of Need" process (CON) which reviews

applications, provides for public comment and ensures that hospice operators don't have a history of fraud or abuse. But according to Jeanne Chirico, president and CEO of the Hospice & Palliative Care Association of NYS (HPCANYS), and Kara Travis, president and CEO of Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care, and a trustee of HPCANYS, there's more that New York can do to protect consumers. They are urging lawmakers to pass a bill carried by state Sen. Liz Krueger and Assemblymember Amy Paulin that would prohibit the establishment of new for-profit hospices in the state (A6032 - Paulin / S6460 - Krueger).

Hospital staffing shortages draws hundreds to California rally


AFSCME, American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees; by UNANC/UHCP and AFSCME International Staff; 5/21/24

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – More than 400 health care union members went to the California state Capitol during National Nurses Week this month to appeal to the state's elected leaders to fix the nursing education backlog and hospital staffing issues that affect patient care. ... Rally participants pressed lawmakers to make health care education and training programs more accessible so students remain in their California communities for their health care careers. They also appealed to lawmakers to empower health care professionals to enforce safe staffing standards in the state's hospitals.



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Laws in motion to bring 'Right to Try' psychedelics at end-of-life

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/21/24

Hospice providers are navigating an evolving landscape of laws opening up pathways of access around psychedelic utilization at the end of life. Despite mounting evidence that psychedelics can improve experiences and reduce symptom burden in some terminally ill patients, these drugs remain difficult to access for those wishing to utilize them. Some states and the federal government have considered legislation that would establish a "right to try" psychedelics and other experimental interventions for certain seriously ill patients.

Mergers & Acquisition News

Addus announces sale of its personal care business in New York

Home Helath Care News; by Andrew Donlan; 5/21/24

Addus HomeCare Corporation is selling its New York personal care business, along with its fiscal intermediary services for the state's consumer-directed care program. The company announced Tuesday that it will offload its New York operations to HCS-Girling, another home-based care provider. The divestment will be worth "up to" \$23 million for Addus, the company said, and the transaction is not yet closed. ... Based in Frisco, Texas, Addus provides home care, home health and hospice services to more than 49,000 consumers across 214 locations spanning 22 states.

Ethics

Nurse charged with stealing pills while taking care of hospice patient

Fox56; by Emily Cherkauskas; 5/22/24

Pennsylvania State Police say a registered nurse stole hundreds of prescription pills while taking care of a hospice patient. According to Pennsylvania State Police, on Feb. 12, troopers were contacted by the director of operations at the Amedisys Home Health / Hospice Care. Troopers were told that Registered Nurse Ashley Laura Miller, 36, of Mohrsville, had become a suspect in the theft and diversion of Oxycodone and Ativan prescriptions. ... [Upon] the passing of the patient, an additional nurse noted that 200 Oxycodone and 30 Ativan pills were

missing from the narcotics count. ... On Wednesday, May 22, Miller was arraigned with bail set at \$5000.



Education

State-level initiatives tackle language-based barriers to worker training, testing

McKnights Senior Living; by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 5/20/24

Foreign-born workers account for 27% of the nation's direct care workforce, but many states maintain strict, English-only testing and training requirements that can prevent some immigrants from entering the workforce, according to the results of a new analysis. PHI looked at five state initiatives working to address those language-based barriers to workforce training and certification with a goal of expanding opportunities for workers who do not speak English as their primary language. PHI highlighted initiatives in five states — California, Massachusetts, New York, Washington and Wisconsin — using approaches deemed innovative to make progress in addressing language access barriers for direct care workers. [Click on the title's link for solutions these five states are using.]

International News

Spread of assisted dying shines spotlight on difficult decisions

Financial Times; by Charlotte Middlehurst; 5/22/24

The right to control your death is a principle that societies have debated for centuries. But, as more countries prepare to legalise medically-assisted dying, the reality of allowing the practice is sparking fresh ethical arguments. Some form of assisted dying is now legal in 9 countries, as well as in 11 US states and

parts of Australia. [Click on the title's link for data and discussion regarding international policies; concerns about increased "unassisted suicide"; rapid legislative/medical decisions; inducing death; devaluing the lives of disabled persons; ethical choices based on economic factors; doctors' choices; and more.]

Today's Encouragement

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds. - Abraham Lincoln, March 4, 1865

Editor's Note: Our American Memorial Day was initiated in 1866 and formalized in 1868 as "Decoration Day" in response to the many soldiers' deaths--on both sides--of the Civil War. [Click here for history from the Veterans Administration.](#)



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