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Headlines

Normandy Welcomes World War II Heroes - 80th Anniversary

U.S. Department of Defense; 6/4/24

World War II veterans met with cheers and applause from throngs of well-wishers as they arrived in Normandy, France, for events commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day. ... The number of these heroes at D-Day anniversary events in Normandy each year is diminishing, but the gratitude and awe for their service and sacrifice endures.

We Honor Veterans - NHPCO

NHPCO; retrieved from the internet on 6/5/24

We Honor Veterans empowers end-of-life care partners to meet the unique needs of America's Veterans and their families. Our guidance and resources are focused on respectful inquiry, compassionate listening and grateful acknowledgment so that veterans can be guided through their life stories toward a more peaceful ending.

Editor's Note: Thank you NHPCO for your foresight in developing this program! You identified the massive generation of WWII veterans we would lose within a window of two decades. You educated hospice organizations nation-wide and equipped us with relevant resources, while we still had time to provide meaningful support. (Today's average age of surviving WWII veterans is 100.)

- *For readers, reach out to a veteran (whatever the generation)--or the family of a veteran--to express your thanks for their service.*
- *For a documentary from the History Channel, watch [D-Day at Pointe-Du-Hoc](#).*
- *For the life-story of a D-Day veteran, read (or listen to) [Len Lomell: D-Day Hero](#), by Steven Gillon (History Channel). "Lomell was praised by Stephen Ambrose as*

the single most important person in the success of D-Day after General Eisenhower." Post-war, Len "Bud" Lomell became a lawyer, humbly devoting his vocation to peace and advocacy for underserved populations. His daughter--The Reverend Dr. Georgine Lomell Buckwalter--devoted her life to senior care chaplaincy, pioneering pastoral care for Memory Care in nursing homes and senior care communities.

Hospice Provider News

Get to know us even before you need us

[WV] The Journal; by Nikki Bigiarelli; 6/2/24

Every day, we make decisions about how we want to live. What is most often not considered is how we want to live at the end of life. We can avoid a lot of uncertainty when we talk to those we love about our goals of care and end-of-life wishes before we encounter a serious illness.

Publisher's Note: Helpful community outreach. Nikki Bigiarelli, CHPN, BSN, RN, is CEO of Hospice of the Panhandle.

3 keys to hospice oversight preparation

Hospice News; by Jack Silverstein; 6/4/24

When hospice providers are being investigated not just by CMS but the FBI, the stakes for compliance are higher than ever. In May of 2024, the federal law enforcement agency placed its spotlight on the rising number of complaints about hospice fraud, in which hospices participate in signing up seniors for care without the seniors' knowledge. Integrity concerns are in four states: Arizona, California, Nevada and Texas. The mechanics vary but the end result is the same: hospices getting paid for services they either did not provide, provided at a substandard level or had no authority to provide at all

- Strategy #1: Evaluate your staff's documentation habits ...
- Strategy #2: Teach the "why" ...
- Strategy #3: Make changes to empower staff ...

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Man killed elderly parents, partner and himself in murder-suicide at SW Miami-Dade home [1 victim was in hospice care]

NBC 6 South Florida; by Laura Rodriguez; 6/3/24

A man shot and killed his elderly parents and partner before turning the gun on himself in a murder-suicide at a home in southwest Miami-Dade Sunday, police and family members said. According to police, [Jesus] Regueira [Jr.] shot and killed his parents, 83-year-old Jesus Regueira Sr. and 84-year-old Mercedes Morato, 61-year-old Kyrsten Stahre, who police identified as his girlfriend but family members said was his wife, before turning the gun on himself. ...&nbs p;The bodies were first discovered by family friend Joanna Cruz, whose mother was bringing food to Morato, who was under hospice care. ... "I think the problem was his mom had a severe stroke and she was in hospice and his mom was his life. Because someone had said that he wasn't handling it well. The mom was there, but she had hospice coming in. His mom was his favorite person in the world. I don't know about the dad but I just know that's probably what happened," Carol Miloch said.

Editor's Note: Workplace violence in healthcare settings continues to rise, and to be a leading cause for nurse unionization and strikes. Hospice educators and quality compliance, what systems, policies, education, and support do you have in place for your employees? What can you strengthen? Common core issues include elder neglect and abuse, grief assessments and support prior to the death (identified numerous times in the CMS Hospice Conditions of Participation), and more. For high-risk families, what specialized team communications do you utilize, thereby strengthening team safety?

Oregon reviews UnitedHealth deal for Amedisys home health, hospice

The Lund Report; by Nick Budnick; 6/4/24

State officials are asking members of the public to weigh in on the proposed acquisition of Amedisys — a hospice and home health and company that operates in Roseburg, Salem and Portland — by an increasingly controversial

health care giant called UnitedHealth Group. Inc. UnitedHealth operates Optum, a subsidiary whose takeover of a clinic chain in the Eugene area has sparked numerous complaints. The state recently approved the company's acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic, an 11-clinic company operating in three counties. Now, it proposes to take over the Oregon offices of a Amedisys, a publicly traded firm, and the transaction has federal officials contemplating a lawsuit to block it. UnitedHealth and Optum are under increasing scrutiny for their market dominance and allegations of anticompetitive conduct.

Clinical News

61% of US adults will have cardiovascular disease by 2050, American Heart Association says

Becker's Hospital Review; by Ashleigh Hollowell; 6/4/24

A majority of adults in the U.S. — around 61% — are likely to be diagnosed with a form of cardiovascular disease by 2050, according to new American Heart Association data. The increased burden will cost the U.S. health system \$1.8 trillion in the time frame. Stroke is anticipated to see the largest increase in prevalence by 2050, according to a June 4 news release from the organization. Projections outlined in AHA data from two reports published in its flagship journal say stroke rates are likely to grow from 3.9% to 6.4%, affecting the health of 20 million adults. Cardiovascular disease, including stroke, is expected to go from affecting 28 million adults to 45 million adults.

Editor's Note: Many hospice clinical processes were developed for cancer trajectories. Hospice and palliative care leaders, what end-of-life, heart-disease specific education do you provide for your clinical teams, your volunteers, and family caregivers? What referral systems do you have in place with cardiologists? With local chapters of the American Heart Association?



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Controversial conversations: Key takeaways from The Jeffrey Fudin Debates on pain and palliative care practices

Pharmacy Times; Interview with Lee Kral, PharmD, FASHP, NBC-HWC, CPMC, CPE; 6/5/24

In an interview with the *Pharmacy Times*®, Lee Kral, PharmD, FASHP, NBC-HWC, CPMC, CPE, clinical pharmacy specialist of pain management at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, shares her insights into pain management in palliative care for patients with cancer-related chronic pain. She highlights the crucial role of pharmacists in managing patient treatment regimens, including administration of opioids, the role of off-label prescribing, and the potential of deprescribing to improve patients' quality of life.

Regulatory News

SCAN wins Medicare Advantage star ratings lawsuit against CMS

Modern Healthcare; by Nona Tepper; 6/4/24

SCAN Health Plan has prevailed in a widely watched federal lawsuit brought last year against the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that alleged regulators did not appropriately calculate the insurer's Medicare Advantage star rating. The decision could have industrywide implications for the star ratings program if regulators decide to recalculate all carriers' star scores for the 2024 plan year. The ruling could also affect several pending cases filed by other insurers against CMS. It also could be appealed.

Hospice groups to CMS: Don't rush CAHPS changes

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 6/3/24

Hospice industry organizations have voiced support for proposed updates to the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) surveys, but raised questions on the implementation timeline. ... One key concern about the timeline is the need for vendors to develop updated electronic medical record (EMR) systems as well as methods of collecting the data, according to Katy Barnett, director of home care and hospice operations for LeadingAge. ... The proposed changes include:

- The addition of a web-mail mode (email invitation to a web survey, with mail follow-up to non-responders)
- A shortened and simplified survey

- Modifications to survey administration protocols to include a prenotification letter and extended field period
- The addition of a new, two-item Care Preferences measure
- Revisions to the existing Hospice Team Communication measure and the existing Getting Hospice Care Training measure
- The removal of three nursing home items and additional survey items impacted by other proposed changes in this rule.



Proposed HOPE tool seeks to fill hospice data gaps but needs tweaking, experts say

McKnight's Home Care; by Adam Healy; 6/3/24

Although the proposed [Hospice Outcome and Patient Evaluation \(HOPE\) tool](#) intends to close important data gaps surrounding end-of-life care, there is more work to be done to improve hospice quality reporting. “So much more information needs to be gathered from these patients,” Katy Barnett, director of home care and hospice operations and policy at LeadingAge, the association of nonprofit aging services providers, which include hospices, told McKnight’s Home Care Daily Pulse in an interview. “It’s just not there in the tool right now.”

Post-Acute Care News

Saint Therese to transition its New Hope Senior Community to new ownership

ABC 4 KTVX; by Accesswire; 6/4/24

After years of intensive research and deliberation about the future of its New Hope senior living community, aging services provider Saint Therese today announced it is transitioning Saint Therese of New Hope [Minn.] to new ownership, supported by senior care provider Compass Healthcare. The transition is expected to be final on August 1, 2024 and the name will change to Woodlake Care Center and Woodlake Residences. ... Abbott said the Saint Therese organization remains dedicated to the senior care and services industry, has no future plans to transition any of its other communities and remains focused on expanding the mission and ministry in the communities in which we are blessed to serve. Saint Therese currently has three locations in the Twin Cities metro, in Brooklyn Park, Woodbury, a new community opening in the fall in Corcoran, a hospice and palliative care home in Shoreview and a community in Monroe, Mich.

Behavioral health patients a challenge to nursing homes

Modern Healthcare; by Diane Eastabrook; 6/4/24

Challenges providing care for nursing home patients with mental health and behavioral health issues are adding to discharge bottlenecks for hospitals, and the demand for such care has led some facilities to set up specialized units with additional staff just for those patients.

Editor's Note: Hospice and palliative care leaders, what end-of-life, mental health and behavioral health specific education do you provide for your clinical teams, your volunteers, and family caregivers? For starters, you need to include dementia care training such as "[Validation Therapy](#)" by Naomi Feil and/or the "[Positive Approach to Care](#)" by Teepa Snow. For mental illness, examine the journal article "[End-of-Life Care in Individuals with Serious Mental Illness](#)." [Click here to "Get Involved with Your Local Chapter"](#) of the national Alzheimer's Association.



Declared dead at nursing home, 74-year-old was alive at funeral home 2 hours later

NBC News; by Dennis Romero; 6/3/24

A 74-year-old woman declared dead at a nursing home was found alive two hours later by funeral home employees attending to what they believed were her remains, a Nebraska sheriff's official said. The employees of the Lincoln funeral home called 911, and the woman was taken to a hospital alive, where she remained Monday, Lancaster County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Ben Houchin said at a news conference. "At this point, we have not been able to find any criminal intent by the nursing home, but the investigation is ongoing," he said.

Technology / Innovations News

Screening tool predicts older adults' need for end-of-life care intervention

McKnight's Long-Term Care News; by Donna Shryer; 6/2/24

A computerized tool can accurately identify older adults visiting the emergency department who have a high risk of dying within six months, a new study found. The tool, called the Geriatric End-of-Life Screening Tool, or GEST, performed more reliably than reviewing diagnosed serious illnesses and estimating mortality rate. GEST uses routine medical data such as age, vital signs, blood tests and past hospitalizations to calculate each person's individualized mortality risk over the next six months. In the study of more than 80,000 emergency department visits by older adults, GEST maintained high accuracy regardless of the person's gender, race/ethnicity or year of visit.

Today's Encouragement

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear. - Franklin Delanor Roosevelt



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