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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

June 10th, 2024

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Headlines

NAHC, NHPCO comment on revision of Hospice Certifying Physician Enrollment Requirement

HomeCare; 6/7/24

The National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) responded to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently revised guidance regarding the implementation of the hospice certifying physician enrollment requirement. NAHC and NHPCO identified that some instruction provided by CMS was inconsistent with established law and regulations regarding the certification of a patient’s terminal illness for new hospice elections after the first benefit period. That instruction, if implemented, could have resulted in major negative impacts on hospices and the patients and families they serve. Both organizations requested that CMS retract the guidance to remain consistent with regulation and statute. On June 6, CMS rescinded its guidance in order to align with current regulations, offering clarity for providers.

Hospice Provider News

Ohio’s Hospice fundraising event raises record amount

An evening of food, beverages, live and silent auctions, and community support topped off the 19th annual Culinary Capers benefiting Ohio’s Hospice. Thanks to the 225 people in attendance at Rustic Ridge Wedding Barn in New Philadelphia, the event raised over \$177,000, shattering the previous record of more than \$130,000. This support helps to ensure all in the communities served by Ohio’s Hospice receive the comprehensive end-of-life care and grief support services they need when it matters most, regardless of their ability to pay.

Good Samaritan Hospice opens regions first freestanding hospice house

CBS WDBJ TV - 7, Roanoke, VA; by Neesy Payne; 6/7/24

A grand opening celebration was held Friday, June 7, for the Sheila S. Strauss Hospice House. It's the region's first freestanding hospice house. It was a part of the original plans of Good Samaritan Hospice back in 1992, and 32 years later, it is now a reality. "Our primary focus will always be taking care of patients at home; but when that's not possible, maybe someone has pain, or needs respite, or a situation just arises that they need a different level of care, then we will be able to provide that in a facility that looks and is designed to be as homelike as possible," said President and CEO of Good Samaritan Hospice Aaron Housh. ... It includes 16 private rooms, a living room, dining room, a chapel, and a courtyard – all aimed to make residents and their families feel at home.



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OKC woman charged after allegedly facilitating mother's suicide: 'Do with it what you will'

The Oklahoman; by Josh Dulaney; 6/6/24

A woman facing murder charges is accused of giving a firearm to her mother who then shot herself to death. In Oklahoma County District Court this week, Jaye Dee Watts, 44, was charged with first-degree murder in the commission of a crime, second-degree murder, kidnapping and aiding suicide by furnishing a weapon. Court documents reveal the shocking allegations. About 7:13 p.m. on Sept. 10 ... Oklahoma City police responded to a call about an attempted suicide involving a firearm. The caller was a hospice employee who said she had received a phone call from Watts, the victim's daughter. According to an affidavit that was part of an arrest warrant filed by a homicide detective, Watts told the hospice employee that her mother, 72, shot herself. The hospice employee called 911 after speaking with Watts, and responding officers found Watts' mother dead inside the home.

Editor's Note: The descriptions are graphic. This is not an example of "Medical Aid in

Dying" for the purpose of ending suffering, but rather an example of elder abuse paired with workplace violence.

Palliative Care Provider News

Palliative care in the intensive care unit: The standard of care

AACN - American Association of Critical-Care Nurses; by Clareen Wiencek, PhD, RN, ACNP, FAAN; 6/7/24

Intensive care unit–based palliative care has evolved over the past 30 years due to the efforts of clinicians, researchers, and advocates for patient-centered care. ... This article provides an overview of the current state of intensive care unit–based palliative care, examines how the barriers to such care have shifted, reviews primary and specialist palliative care, addresses the impact of COVID-19, and presents resources to help nurses and intensive care unit teams achieve optimal outcomes. *[Access to the full article requires subscription or purchase of the individual article.]*

Clinical News

Patient's wish to visit Graceland granted with help of Texarkana's Heritage Hospice

NBC KTAL-6, Texarkana, TX: by Hunter Trombetta; 6/7/24

A Texarkana hospice recently fulfilled one of its patients' wishes. Debora Warren is a patient with Heritage Home Health & Hospice. She says she has been an Elvis fan since she was 10 years old. ... Her favorite Elvis song, "If I Can Dream," surely takes on a new meaning now because, at the age of 71, her dream to visit Graceland came true thanks to a unique program at Heritage Hospice. "Wishes is a program where we grant our hospice patients their final wishes. Miss Debora Warren wanted to go to Graceland, and so we made that happen," says Kristy Minton, the Volunteer Coordinator at Heritage Home Health and Hospice.



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Reply to: Frailty and ethics at the end of life: The importance of a comprehensive assessment

Journal of the American Geriatrics Society; by Colum Thomas MD, Eduardo Bruera MD, William Breitbart MD, Yesne Alici MD, Liz Blackler MBE, LCSW-R, Julia D. Kulikowski MD, Daniel P. Sulmasy MD, PhD; 6/5/24

The care of older persons at the end of life often involves competing concerns and highly value-sensitive decisions. In a recent article, we proposed a set of ethical rules—the canons of therapy—to help clinicians navigate complex cases involving older adults with delirium at the end of life. The canons of therapy most pertinent to such cases are restoration, means-end proportionality, discretion, and parsimony (see Table 1 for a description). These canons provide a structured toolset aligned with practical wisdom, which can serve as an ethical heuristic for guiding therapeutic judgments. ...

Sexual function in serious illness: Areej El-Jawahri, Sharon Bober, and Don Dizon

GeriPal Podcast; Eric Widera, Alex Smith, Areej El-Jawahri, Sharon Bober, Don Dizon; 6/6/24

As Eric notes at the end of today's podcast, we talk about many difficult issues with our patients. How long they might have to live. Their declining cognitive abilities. What makes their lives meaningful, brings them joy, a sense of purpose. But one issue we're not as good at discussing with our patients is sexual health. On today's podcast Areej El-Jawahri, oncologist specializing in blood cancers at MGH, says that sexual health is one of the top if not the top issue among cancer survivors. Clearly this issue is important to patients.

Rural pharmacy owners say it's getting harder to stay open

Times West Virginian; by Devi Shastri; 6/5/24

Rural pharmacies can be a touchstone for their communities. The staff knows everyone's names and drugs, answers questions about residents' mail-order

prescriptions or can spot the signs of serious illness. But their business models face unrelenting pressures to the point that sometimes they have to close. An AP analysis of data from 49 states and the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs shows that several largely rural states have some of the lowest number of pharmacies per ZIP code.&nb sp;

Editor's Note: This trend for closures in rural areas is rampant for hospitals, emergency departments, physicians, and more. [Click here for a letter from NHPCO and numerous hospice providers to Congress, Jan. 5, 2024: Protect rural and frontier American's access to hospice and palliative care.](#)



Regulatory News

[Returning to the community: Health care after incarceration: A guide for health care reentry](#)

CMS; 6/6/24

This joint publication by CMS and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs helps people recently released from incarceration take charge of their health, connect to health services, and find additional resources. It is available in Spanish on the Access Care webpage and more languages are coming soon.

Mergers & Acquisition News

Why private equity hospice investors need to re-focus on patients

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 6/7/24

As private equity investors seek out hospice and other health care transactions, they should retrain their sights on potential benefits for patients in addition to financial metrics. Driving this is a changing regulatory environment as scrutiny heats up for both hospices and the private equity firms themselves. Tightened regulation in the hospice space has led to longer, more stringent diligence processes when it comes to buying and selling provider companies. This means that potential buyers are looking hard at compliance and quality metrics before completing a deal, along with the seller's financials.

Post-Acute Care News

These MD architects want to redesign your hospital

Medscape; by Amanda Loudin; 6/5/24

Little known fact: Florence Nightingale might have been the most famous clinician to notice and openly comment on the role of hospital design in patient care. In her now well-known writings on nursing, Nightingale advocated for "open windows to maximize light and ventilation," among other elements. Today, a growing group of physician-designers are paying attention to many such details — windows in patient rooms included. Their goal: To build hospitals and medical facilities where design can enhance patient and clinician well-being. ...



General News

'The last option': Why doctor, resident unions continue to grow

Modern Healthcare; by Mari Devereaux; 6/6/24

A wave of labor organization continues among doctors, residents and fellows as

more than 3,000 have joined unions so far this year, driven by worries about burnout, administrative burden and inadequate patient care. Doctors and support staff are seeking contracts across organizations that ensure reduced workloads and more one-on-one patient care time. However, where doctors want more decision-making power, residents are pushing for better benefits and higher pay.

Union ratifies RN contract with Ascension Genesys

WNEM-TV5, Genessee Co., Mich; by Hannah Mose; 6/5/24

The union representing the registered nurses (RNs) at Ascension Genesys Hospital announced the tentative agreement between the union and the hospital has been ratified. On May 20, Teamsters Local 322 president Dan Glass said there had been months of failed negotiations between the union and the hospital, and if there wasn't an agreement made by May 24, the union would strike. However, on May 22, Teamsters Local 322 said a tentative agreement had been reached between the union and the hospital.

Today's Encouragement

**You don't need a New Year to make a change. All you need is a Monday!
Make this the week you change your life. - Anonymous**



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