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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

June 20th, 2024

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Headlines

[Bluegrass Care Navigators and Hosparus Health announce landmark affiliation agreement](#)

Hosparus Health Press Release; 6/17/24

Today marks a significant milestone as Bluegrass Care Navigators and Hosparus Health announced that their respective boards of directors have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to begin working toward a formal affiliation between the two organizations. The affiliation is rooted in the organizations' shared mission of providing compassionate, high-quality care to those facing serious illness and end-of-life. It aims to enhance service delivery, improve operational efficiencies, and bolster long-term sustainability — all while preserving the unique identities and local operations of both organizations. David Cook, Hosparus Health President and CEO, said, "This formal affiliation is designed to strengthen and improve resiliency for our organizations. Rest assured, we will continue to honor and maintain the distinct identities and local presence that our communities have come to cherish. This affiliation is a testament to our shared commitment to working together and enhancing care for our communities." "Both Bluegrass Care Navigators and Hosparus Health share a joint mission: to provide exceptional, compassionate, high-quality care to those facing frailty, serious illness and end-of-life," added Liz Fowler, President and CEO of Bluegrass Care Navigators. "Our long histories of service, innovation, and excellence make this affiliation a natural and exciting next step." *[Click on the title's link to read more.]*

Hospice Provider News

Cruisin' Zeake surpasses \$100K raised for Hospice of Northwest Ohio

WTVG 13 Action News, Toledo, OH; by Alexandria Manthey; 6/15/24

A classic car show on fathers day weekend is sure to have some family fun, but Saturday's show at Levis Commons in Perrysburg meant more than that. After 14 years of raising money for Hospice of Northwest Ohio, Cruisin' Zeake hit \$100,000 raised. Zeake said his group's car shows make up the second biggest fundraising events for the charity. They surpassed the six figure number by just \$16 at Saturday's Classic Car Show at Levis Commons. Proceeds of the 50/50 and all the money in the do nation jar will benefit Hospice. "I've got people behind me, it's not just Cruisin' Zeake," Zeake said. "The car community, they have hearts of gold. When I ask them to step up, they're there."

Mt. Hood Hospice honors women veterans with event

NewsBreak; by Brit Allen; 6/15/24

On Wednesday, June 12, Jolie Phanton, community outreach director for the organization took Mt. Hood's veterans services a step further with a National Women Veterans Recognition Day celebration at Clackamas County Bank. The event featured a presentation on the history of women's involvement in American-involved conflicts, as far back as the Revolutionary War up to current day. She spoke about how women have for a long time served as nurses, supply distributors, informants, and before they were allowed to fight alongside men, some disguised themselves as men and risked their lives on the battlefield. Women have also played many other roles in the military over the past 200 years. [Click on the title's link to read more.]

Editor's Note: While we have highlighted various hospice veterans' stories, this brings fresh insights, information, and ideas. Thank you Mt. Hood Hospice for this all-important community outreach and validation for women veterans!

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Compliance landmines in the hospice regulatory landscape

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 6/14/24

Hospice providers are navigating a minefield in today's regulatory environment to avoid getting caught up in the mix of fraudulent activity in the space. The current state of hospice regulations has providers walking compliance tightropes, according to Patrick Harrison, senior director of regulatory and compliance at the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). Fraud, waste and abuse exist in several different industries and health care is no exception. But the majority of hospices are striving to provide quality end-of-life experiences to terminally ill patients and their families, Harrison said at the Hospice News Elevate conference in Washington D.C.

Man living with ALS for the last 24 years knocks off an item on his bucket list: Skydiving

CBS KCTV 5, Waldron, Missouri; by Joe Hennessy; 6/14/24

One of the longest-living people with ALS, 66-year-old Mark Johnson, achieved his dream of skydiving ... His passion for the skies started at a young age with his dad being an airline pilot. ... "I used to fly airplanes when I was a kid, I always wanted to jump out of one," he said. "Being up there, being able to see everything. All of God's creation out there." Johnson is one of the longest survivors of ALS, living with the disease now for almost 25 years, getting assistance from the team at Shirkey Hospice in Richmond, Missouri. He's traveled to Washington D.C. to raise awareness and pass bills to help those impacted too. ... How did we get here ...? He was asked by the hospice care workers a while

back what is one thing he wants to do and he said skydiving so they managed to find a place that would allow for that dream to come true.

HHS to end Medicare pay program after Change Healthcare breach

Bloomberg Law; by Tony Pugh; 6/17/24

The Biden administration announced plans Monday to terminate a program that provided more than \$3.2 billion in accelerated and advance Medicare payments to hospitals, physicians, and others suffering cash flow disruptions following the Change Healthcare cyberattack in February. Medicare payments under the Accelerated and Advance Payment (AAP) Program for the Change Healthcare/Optum Payment Disruption (CHOPD) will end on July 12, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced.



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Clinical News

Cancer therapy at end of life may not boost survival

Cure; by Brielle Benyon; 6/17/24

Patients with advanced solid cancers who received systemic therapy toward the end of life typically did not live any longer than patients who did not receive treatment, according to research published in *JAMA Oncology*. Because cancer treatments can dampen quality of life, it is crucial that patients and their loved ones discuss goals of care and prognosis with their oncology team, two experts emphasized. "I think once we progress to advanced and metastatic cancer when cure is no longer feasible, it's important to consider goals-of-care conversations," said study author Maureen Canavan, associate research scientist at Yale School of Medicine. The researchers analyzed data from 78,446 patients treated across 144 different cancer treatment centers between the years 2015 and 2019. The cancers represented in the study were breast, colorectal, non-small cell lung, pancreatic, kidney and bladder.

Cachexia and anorexia in serious illness: A podcast with Eduardo Bruera

Geripal [podcast]; by Eric Widera, Alex Smith, Eduardo Bruera; 6/13/24

I always find cachexia in serious illness puzzling. I feel like I recognize it when I see it, but I struggle to give a clear definition or provide effective ways to address it. In today's podcast, we had the opportunity to learn from a renowned expert in palliative care, Eduardo Bruera, about cachexia and anorexia in serious illness. Eduardo established one of the first palliative care programs in 1984, created the Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale (ESAS), and significantly contributed to the evidence base for palliative care symptoms that many of us rely on daily. During our discussion with Eduardo, we delved into how we can define cachexia and anorexia, why they occur in conditions like cancer, how to assess for them, and explored the interventions that are helpful and those that are not in the treatment of these conditions.

When your parents die: Becoming an adult orphan

The Montecito Journal; by Deann Zampelli; 6/18/24

Shortly after I got married, my 64-year-old mother lost her battle with breast cancer. Seven years later my father joined her. The loss isn't any less painful just because you are a grown-up. ... Many don't realize that grief isn't linear. We don't go through a neat little phase, checking off each stage as we complete it. The famous (and somewhat debunked) five stages of grief introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in the 1960s (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance) were from a study she did on the emotional states of patients who were dying. It was their stages she was referencing, not ours. ... I came to a frightening realization. ... It suddenly dawned on me that my siblings and I were next in line to kick it. [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

*Editor's Note: While serving in your hospice leadership roles, you experience the ongoing aging, changes and likely even deaths of your own family members, friends, and mentors. Do you, your hospice communications, and/or your grief services rely on the outdated "Stages of Grief" model? These "stages" opened the door in the 1960's for talking about death and dying, but became extremely misused and overpopularized for persons **surviving** the loss. Learn, update your knowledge, information, and clinical bereavement practices with extensive bereavement/loss/grief research, clinical best practices, and more. For expert information, resources, and bereavement professionals, examine www.adec.org, the Association for Death Education and Counseling.*



Regulatory News

CMS - Roadmap to Better Care: Tribal Version

CMS; 6/17/24

This version of the Roadmap has been updated to help members of the American Indian and Alaskan Native community connect to their health care, including benefits provided through the Indian Health Service (IHS), Medicare, Medicaid, Marketplaces, or private insurance. Unlike Medicare, Medicaid, the IHS is not an insurance program or an established benefits package. IHS cannot guarantee funds are available each year, and as a result sometimes needs to prioritize patients of greatest need. The preservation of legacy, heritage, and traditions is vital. This roadmap is designed to help sustain cultural richness and strengthen the well-being of present and future American Indian and Alaska Natives for generations. To learn more about enrollment in Marketplace, Medicare, or Medicaid see pages 4 and 5 or visit ihs.gov/forpatients.

Chicago laboratory owner charged with defrauding Medicare in \$60 million COVID-19 test kit scheme

JD Supra; by Randall Brater, M.H. Joshua Chiu, Michael Dearington, Rebecca Foreman, Nadia Patel, D. Jacques Smith, Hillary Stemple; 6/17/24

The Chicago-based owner of two laboratories, Zoom Labs Inc. and Western Labs

Co., has been charged with health care fraud and money laundering in connection with more than \$60 million in Medicare claims for over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 test kits, including tests delivered to thousands of deceased beneficiaries. Federal prosecutors began investigating Medicare claims from Syed S. Ahmed's two laboratories after noticing a "massive spike" in the laboratories' claims in 2023, which coincided with Ahmed assuming control of Zoom [Labs]. ... Ahmed is charged with health care fraud under 18 U.S.C. § 1347 and money laundering under 18 U.S.C. §§ 1956 and 1957.

Technology / Innovations News

Global digital health outlook and growth report 2024: Care at home and alternative sites will see a growing preference, focus will be on adoption across clinical and operational use cases

Classic 96.7 FM; by Business Wire; 6/17/24

The digital health industry has maintained a consistent growth trajectory. Investing in technologies that help organizations achieve the quintuple aim of healthcare is a constant priority. However, high inflation and tight monetary policy will impact the investment landscape as it shifts from top-line growth to profitability. ... Change management initiatives will require stakeholder education to understand the pros and cons of newer technology initiatives and work alongside these to improve clinical and operational processes. Top 2024 Digital Health Predictions:

- Generative AI will Become a Key Part of the Digital Strategy; The Focus will be on Adoption Across Clinical and Operational Use Cases
- Meeting Patients Outside the Traditional Four Walls will Become Popular; Care at Home and Alternative Sites will See a Growing Preference
- Business Model Innovation will Take Pace in Retail Health
- Staff Shortage will Continue to Plague the Healthcare Industry, Even as Leaders Look at Virtual and AI Models for Possible Solutions
- ROI will be the Biggest Concern Among Digital Health CEOs



Better manage privacy concerns related to AI in healthcare

Fior Reports; by Becca Roberts; 6/17/24

Artificial intelligence technologies offer tremendous potential in healthcare, but it is critical for organizations to carefully consider the complex privacy concerns associated with different types of AI products and deployments, says Karen Habercoss, privacy officer at UChicago Medicine. "It's critical to really understand what the use cases are and how we can minimize the amount of data we share to protect our patients, their privacy and their data," she said. "I'm very much in favor of AI. I think it will bring about a fundamental change in the way we care for patients clinically in healthcare. Those are the very positive things that will come out of it. But with that comes a great responsibility to protect our patients from things they may not understand," she said.

General News

It's your funeral! How to plan ahead for the best party you'll never attend

The Guardian; by Doosie Morris; 6/14/24

Years before the indomitable Joan Rivers died in 2014 she immortalised [hopes for her own farewell](#) in her memoir. ... The rise in so-called "death positivity", along with the mortal reality check wreaked on us by the pandemic, has helped to reframe death as a part of life for many of us. Taboos around discussing death are breaking down and planning your own funeral is increasingly considered as responsible as writing a will. ... While the latest Australian Funeral Industry report found less than one in five Australians have actually planned their own funeral, a definite vibe shift is occurring and 90% of people say they want to. ... "When people say 'I don't want a funeral' I remind them it's not actually for them," Griffith says. "You might think you're doing your loved ones a

favour, but you are actually denying everyone who needs somewhere to put their grief." ...

Education

'I tried to get into their shoes and their culture'. Care worker experiences in cultural end-of-life care: Interpretative phenomenological analysis

Journal of Clinical Nursing / Early View; by Elizabeth Lambert RN, BN (Hons), Jo Gibson RN, BN, PhD, MAdvNsgPrac, Kasia Bail RN, BN(Hons), GCHE, PhD

Aim: What are care workers' lived experiences caring for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds during end-of-life care?

What does this paper contribute to the wider global community? This study highlights the importance of understanding care workers' experiences in providing culturally appropriate end-of-life care.

- Care workers desired more training and support from their employing organisations.
- The absence of cultural and palliative care training and education affected the quality of care the workers could provide and impacted on their emotional labour.
- Care workers felt responsible for their gaps in knowledge and often spent their own time trying to learn the language and culture of their clients.
- Care workers were burdened by the lack of practical and psychological support which impacted their quality of life outside of the work environment.



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