

Cordt Kassner

From: Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter
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Sent: Tuesday, July 2, 2024 4:00 AM
To: Cordt Kassner
Subject: Your Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter for 07/02/24

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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

July 2nd, 2024

Contents

- [1. NPHI Statement: Hospital notifications to patients of hospice referral options](#)
- [2. NAHC-NHPCO Alliance Transition Board met for 1st time last week](#)
- [3. Families, volunteers share stories of finding peace through hospice](#)
- [4. Message into the Community with Tom Howell](#)
- [5. Memorial outing raises \\$15,000 for McLaren Hospice](#)
- [6. Community Hospice & Palliative Care, a subsidiary of Alivia Care, Inc., becomes last remaining not-for-profit hospice provider \[in North Florida\]](#)
- [7. Nonprofit that assisted cancer patients donates remaining funds to Hospice of Texarkana](#)
- [8. Factors affecting palliative care collaboration with pain medicine specialists](#)

9. [\[American Heart Association\] Palliative care beneficial to manage symptoms, improve quality of life for people with CVD](#)
10. [National Health Care Fraud Enforcement Action results in 193 defendants charged and over \\$2.75 billion in false claims](#)
11. [Optum to pay \\$20M to settle improper prescription allegations](#)
12. [NAHC re-files lawsuit against HHS, CMS over home health cuts](#)
13. [How the Supreme Court's Chevron Decision could help stop home health cuts](#)
14. [Amedisys to divest certain home health locations to VitalCaring, clearing path for UnitedHealth Group deal](#)
15. [How 'Human-Kind' AI can reshape your business](#)
16. [In a 1st at ChristianaCare, physicians vote to unionize](#)
17. [Today's Encouragement: If it wasn't hard ...](#)

Headlines

[NPHI Statement: Hospital notifications to patients of hospice referral options](#)

NPHI press release; 6/17/24

Many hospitals are providing discharged patients with a list of all Medicare-certified hospices in the geographic area in which the patient resides, in the mistaken belief that this is a requirement under the Medicare Conditions of Participation (COPs). Hospitals may be understandably confused by existing hospital CoPs that require such lists to be provided for HH, SNF, IRF and LTCHs. Section 482.43(c)(2) clearly states these provider types and excludes hospices. There is no such requirement in the hospice regulations or law that requires a hospital to provide patients with a list of all hospices in a particular geographic area. [See statement for additional information.]

[NAHC-NHPCO Alliance Transition Board met for 1st time last week](#)

NAHC press release; 7/1/24

Today, July 1, 2024, is the first day of the NAHC-NHPCO Alliance. While the two organizations will continue to operate separately in some areas until the end of the year, they are now governed by a single body, the Transition Board, which held its inaugural meeting last week. "This is an important step in the process of transitioning from our fiduciary duties as governing bodies of NAHC and NHPCO respectively, to a singular focus on our duties of care, obedience and loyalty to

what is now the merged entity," said Alliance Transition Board Chair Ken Albert. "From July 1 on, we are NAHC -NHPCO Alliance (soon to be named)..." Until the Alliance hires a new CEO, Bill Dombi and Ben Marcantonio will be acting as co-CEOs of the organization, and will be closely consulting with each other on all important matters. Below is a full list of attendees at the Transition Board meeting.

- Kenneth Albert, Chair
- David Causby
- Trisha Crissman
- Melinda Gruber, Vice Chair
- Demetress Harrell
- Susan D. Lloyd
- Tarrah Lowry
- Christine McMichael
- Mark Morse
- Mary Myers
- John Olajide
- Robert 'Bob' Parker
- Susan Ponder-Stansel
- Sara Ratcliffe
- Lynne Sexten, Secretary
- Jennifer Sheets
- William Simione, III, Treasurer
- Beth Slepian
- David Totaro
- Nick Westfall
- NAHC/NHPCO Staff Present: Bill Dombi, Ben Marcantonio, Andrea Devoti, Raul Suarez, Shirnae Johnson
- Two members of the McKinley staff also attended the meeting.

Publisher's Note: NAHC membership may be required to access the full press release.

Hospice Provider News

Families, volunteers share stories of finding peace through hospice

Salina Post; by Cristina Janney, Hays Post; 6/29/24

This is a two-part series on hospice care in northwest Kansas. Dalene Juenemann and her father, Dean, had to make the difficult decision to enter hospice care after he was diagnosed with bladder cancer. "He was just such a social guy and someone was in a couple times a week," she said. "They were checking in on him and it was that security blanket he had." ... He didn't want to go through aggressive chemo and he didn't qualify for a bladder removal because of his age. "He chose quality of life," she said. "It was that final decision that we are done with everyone wanting a piece of me. I'm just going to enjoy life," she said. Dalene's father, Dean Shearer, was a patient of NWKareS, Hospice of Northwest Kansas, which serves 16 counties from Interstate 70 to the Nebraska border and Trego County to the Colorado border. ... She said the extra care hospice offered allowed her to just be a daughter to her father as he was dying. [Click on the title's link to continue reading stories from families and volunteers at NWKAreS.]



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"Message into the Community" with Tom Howell

TCN Anatomy of Leadership; podcast hosted by Chris Comeaux; 6/26/24

In this episode of the Anatomy of Leadership, Chris Comeaux interviews Tom Howell, Principal with Hundred Trees LLC, about the importance of effective messaging in leadership and marketing. They discuss the role of listening and research in crafting impactful messages that resonate with the community. Tom shares his experience using focus groups and qualitative research to understand people's perceptions and values. Tom emphasizes the need for organizations to deliver on their promises and provide quality products or services. The conversation highlights the importance of communication as a two-way process and the value of engaging and involving people in discussions.

Memorial outing raises \$15,000 for McLaren Hospice

MyFenton.com - tctimes.com; Fenton, MI; 6/28/24

The 27th annual Nancy Streber Memorial Golf Classic held May 11 at Heather Hills Golf Course in Romeo raised more than \$15,000 for McLaren Hospice's end-of-life care services —breaking its fundraising record previously reached in 2023. The event, founded by Dave Streber and his family, honors the memory of his mother, Nancy, and the care her father received as a McLaren patient. In addition to the fundraising milestone, the event hosted 140, making it one of the largest, most successful events in the memorial outing's history. "We are profoundly grateful for the 27 years of dedication from Dave Streber and his family, as well as the numerous organizations and all of individuals who have contributed to this event and supported McLaren Hospice over the years," said Cindy Tomlinson, MSN, RN, vice president of hospice at McLaren Health Management Group.

Community Hospice & Palliative Care, a subsidiary of Alivia Care, Inc., becomes last remaining not-for-profit hospice provider [in North Florida]

PR.com - Alivia Care, Inc. Press Releases, Gainesville, FL; 6/29/24

With recent changes in end-of-life care, North Florida residents may notice a shift as Haven, a long-standing provider in the region, transitions due to acquisition by a for-profit health care company, BrightSpring Health Services. As this transition takes place, Community Hospice & Palliative Care, a subsidiary of Alivia Care, Inc., wishes to express its continued dedication to providing compassionate, community-based care to individuals and families in the community. "We understand that transitions in healthcare can be challenging for our community," said Phillip Ward, President, and CEO of Community Hospice & Palliative Care. "However, we want to reassure everyone that our dedication to serving our neighbors with compassion, dignity, and unwavering commitment remains as strong as ever."

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Nonprofit that assisted cancer patients donates remaining funds to Hospice of Texarkana

Texarkana Gazette, Texarkana, TX; by Gazette Staff; 6/28/24

The Angel Fund Foundation has voted to dissolve as a nonprofit and donate its remaining of approximately \$148,000 of funds to Hospice of Texarkana. Founded in 2006 by cancer survivor Beth Morgan, The Angel Fund Foundation helped cancer patients in the community for two decades, according to a news release from Hospice of Texarkana. "We feel fortunate that Beth Morgan and the Angel Fund Foundation Board have chosen Hospice of Texarkana as the recipient of the remaining assets," said Cindy Marsh, Hospice of Texarkana Executive Director. "After meeting with Mrs. Morgan and gaining clarity on her wishes for the dissolution of funds, it seemed like a perfect transition to provide hospice care for cancer patients with those funds," Marsh said.

Clinical News

Factors affecting palliative care collaboration with pain medicine specialists

Clinical Pain Advisor; by James Maitlall, MD; 6/27/24

Structured collaboration between physicians working in palliative care (PC) and pain medicine (PM) may increase PC physician referral of seriously ill patients to PM specialists and potentially optimize their care, according to study results published in the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*. ... In a survey study, a multicenter team of investigators explored attitudes and beliefs among US PC

physicians regarding PM specialists, as well as factors potentially impacting collaboration between physicians in these 2 areas of practice. ... The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) approved the survey for distribution to 1000 of its physician members, who were selected at random. ... The investigators concluded, "Although we found that PC physicians have highly positive attitudes about the value of PM specialists, referral rates remain low, even for IDDS implantation, which has perhaps the largest body of evidence for patients with complex cancer-associated pain."

[American Heart Association] Palliative care beneficial to manage symptoms, improve quality of life for people with CVD [cardiovascular disease]

American Heart Association; by NewMediaWire; 7/1/24

Implementing patient-centered palliative care therapies, including prescribing, adjusting or discontinuing medications as needed, may help control symptoms and improve quality of life for people with heart disease, according to "Palliative Pharmacotherapy for Cardiovascular Disease," a new scientific statement from the American Heart Association, published today in the Association's journal, *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*. The new scientific statement reviews current evidence on the benefits and risks of cardiovascular and essential palliative medications. The statement provides guidance for health care professionals to incorporate palliative methods as part of holistic medication management at all stages of a patient's health conditions, emphasizing the importance of shared decision-making and goal-oriented care.



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Regulatory News

National Health Care Fraud Enforcement Action results in 193 defendants charged and over \$2.75 billion in false claims

United States Attorney's Office - Western District of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA;
6/27/24

The Justice Department today announced the 2024 National Health Care Fraud Enforcement Action, which resulted in criminal charges against 193 defendants, including 76 doctors, nurse practitioners, and other licensed medical professionals in 32 federal districts across the United States, for their alleged participation in various health care fraud schemes involving approximately \$2.75 billion in intended losses and \$1.6 billion in actual losses. In connection with the coordinated nationwide law enforcement action, and together with federal and state law enforcement partners, the government seized over \$231 million in cash, luxury vehicles, gold, and other assets.

Optum to pay \$20M to settle improper prescription allegations

Becker's Hospital Review; by Rylee Wilson; 6/28/24

OptumRx will pay \$20 million to settle allegations it improperly dispensed some opioid medications, the Justice Department said June 27. The settlement resolves an investigation into if OptumRx improperly filled certain opioid prescriptions between 2013 and 2015. The Justice Department alleged the pharmaceutical benefit manager improperly dispensed opioids in combination with other drugs, including benzodiazepines and muscle relaxants, from its mail-order pharmacy operations in Carlsbad, Calif. Opioids prescribed alongside benzodiazepines and muscle relaxants are commonly referred to as "trinity" prescriptions. These prescriptions raise red flags that the drugs may not be for legitimate medical use, and could lead to the diversion of controlled substances, the Justice Department said. In its investigation, the department alleged OptumRx dispensed trinity prescriptions without resolving red flags. OptumRx does not admit liability as part of the settlement.

Public Policy News

NAHC re-files lawsuit against HHS, CMS over home health cuts

Home Health Care News; by Joyce Famakinwa; 6/28/24

The National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) hasn't given up on efforts to push back on Medicare home health payment calculations. NAHC has re-filled its lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The lawsuit focuses on the home health PDGM budget neutrality

adjustment, which imposed both permanent and temporary calculations with a methodology that NAHC believes is noncompliant with the law. The original lawsuit was filed last summer, and in April the case was dismissed by a federal court in Washington D.C. The case was dismissed on the basis that NAHC did not fully exhaust administrative appeal remedies. ... There are a number of factors that made NAHC decide to re-file the lawsuit, according to [NAHC President, William A.] Dombi. “No. 1, it will be faster,” he said. “No. 2, we are highly likely to get the same judge, as there’s a related litigation standard in an assignment of cases,” he said. One of the biggest factors that heavily contributed to NAHC’s decision was the Supreme Court ruling, which upended the Chevron Doctrine.



How the Supreme Court’s Chevron Decision could help stop home health cuts

Home Health Care News; by Andrew Donlan; 6/28/24

On Friday, the U.S. Supreme Court upended the Chevron doctrine precedent. For home health industry purposes, that means a potentially weakened Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) moving forward. The news comes just two days after the home health proposed payment rule was released, which included significant cuts for the third straight year. Broadly, moving away from the Chevron precedent – usually known as the Chevron doctrine – will mean less

regulatory power for government agencies. Government agencies often take their own interpretations of certain laws and statutes, and then act upon those interpretations. ... The National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) already filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and CMS over rate cuts in 2023. "In our own analysis, we believe that providers of home health have been underpaid as it relates to budget neutrality," NAHC President William A. Dombi said when the lawsuit was filed. "At minimum, we would expect to see the rate cuts from 2023, that were permanent readjustments to the base rate, and the one proposed for 2024, along with the temporary adjustments ... to go away. The end product of that is that we would have a stable system to deliver home health services to Medicare beneficiaries."

Mergers & Acquisition News

[Amedisys to divest certain home health locations to VitalCaring, clearing path for UnitedHealth Group deal](#)

Home Health Care News; by Andrew Donlan; 6/28/24

Amedisys Inc. filed paperwork Friday with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission saying it has agreed to divest "certain" locations to an affiliate of home health and hospice company VitalCaring. The divestiture was a way for Amedisys to avoid further antitrust concerns from regulators prior to it joining UnitedHealth Group. UnitedHealth Group's Optum agreed to purchase Amedisys last June for a purchase price of \$3.3 billion. Optum already owns LHC Group, another one of the largest home health companies in the country. The Baton Rouge, Louisiana-based Amedisys has 521 care centers in 37 states and the District of Columbia. It offers home health, hospice, palliative and home-based high-acuity care.

Technology / Innovations News

[How 'Human-Kind' AI can reshape your business](#)

Forbes; by Mark Cameron; 7/1/24

As AI models mature, their impact on the economy is becoming increasingly profound. They offer unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency. Here's how. ... AI enables traditional businesses to accomplish more with fewer resources. ... As AI begins to take over mundane tasks, the role of the human

workforce is evolving. Employees are no longer cogs in the machine—they're becoming value creators. The focus is evolving toward roles that require critical thinking, creativity and emotional intelligence—areas where humans excel, but AI still has limitations. This shift necessitates upskilling and reskilling initiatives to prepare the workforce for new, high-value roles in an AI-driven economy.



General News

In a 1st at ChristianaCare, physicians vote to unionize

Becker's Hospital Review; by Kelly Gooch; 7/1/24

Physicians at ChristianaCare locations in Delaware and Maryland **voted** to join the Doctors Council, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union. ... The decision marks the first attending physician union in Delaware, the first union at ChristianaCare, and the largest union of private sector physicians in the U.S., according to the Doctors Council. Union representatives said the physicians' decision is a response to ongoing concerns about corporatization and their professional autonomy.

Today's Encouragement

If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it. It's the hard that makes it great. - Tom Hanks



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