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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

July 3rd, 2024

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Headlines

[A little help from your friends... Jennifer Hale, MSN, RN, CHPN, CPHQ](#)

A little help from your friends is a memorial fund set up for Jennifer Hale's family. If interested, you can [read more about it and donate here](#). Donations accepted 6/30/24 - 7/15/24. ... We recently [announced](#) Jennifer Hale unexpectedly died Friday, 6/21/24. Vice President of Quality and Standards at Compassus, former Vice President Clinical Services at Optum Palliative Care and Hospice, and former Executive Director of the Georgia Hospice & Palliative Care Organization, Jennifer was widely known, respected, and loved in the hospice community. We share our condolences with her family, friends, and colleagues. Her obituary is posted [here](#).

Hospice Provider News

[Apply now for AHA's 2025 Circle of Life Award recognizing end-of-life and hospice care providers](#)

American Hospital Association press release; 5/30/24

Applications are open through July 24 for AHA's 2025 Circle of Life Award, which recognizes hospitals and health systems that advance end-of-life and hospice care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective and equitable. There will be up to three recipients of the award, and Citations of Honor may also be presented to other noteworthy programs.

[Monroe Clinic & Hospital Foundation celebrates record-breaking mini golf event](#)

The Monroe Times, Monroe, WI; 6/30/24

The Monroe Clinic & Hospital Foundation's "Little Golf" and Grill event, held on June 11, was an afternoon of mini golf that led into a night full of generous giving for a great cause. ... The event raised a record-breaking more than \$79,600 from countless heartfelt donations provided by community members and businesses. This brought the total raised over the event's 32 years to over \$1,005,000. "Three decades of commitment from our healthcare team and the community to support and grow local hospice care is an incredible achievement," shared Jane Sybers, Executive Director of Monroe Clinic & Hospital Foundation, a member of SSM Health. "I have the privilege to share gratitude stories with donors whose loved ones walked through hospice with us. To surpass one-million-dollars is such an incredible milestone and shows how much our community values this meaningful service." The evening program walked attendees through the hospice patient journey. During the program, different staff members shared their role in patient care and the impact their patients have on them.



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Muncie hospice nurse accused of obtaining narcotics 'by fraud or deceit'

The Star Press, Muncie, IN; by Douglas Walker; 7/2/24

A Muncie hospice nurse is accused of ordering prescription pain medication in the names of nursing home residents who then never received the narcotics. Meredith Griffin Briles, 45, is charged in Delaware Circuit Court 5 with obtaining a controlled substance by fraud or deceit, possession of a narcotic drug and failure to make, keep or furnish a record. All three charges are Level 6 felonies carrying up to 30 months in prison.

Palliative Care Provider News

National POLST collaborative announces new Board of Directors and Officers

LinkedIn post; 6/27/24

The National POLST Collaborative, a leader in promoting the understanding and use of POLST – a set of portable medical orders for individuals with serious illness or frailty, is proud to announce the election of its new board of directors and officers. New Board of Directors members to the 12-person Board:

- Kim Callanan, MA (Texas)
- Jeannette Kojane, MPH (Hawaii)
- Christine McMichael, MA, LMHC (Massachusetts)

Nine members are continuing, as follows: Jennifer Ballentine, MA/California, Vicki Buchda MS, RN, NEA-BC/Arizona; Paul Drager, JD/New Hampshire; Emmie Gardner, MSW, LCSW/Utah; Matt Kestenbaum, MD/Virginia; Cindy Munn, MHA/Louisiana; Susan Nelson, MD/Louisiana; Paula Sanders/Georgia; Karl Steinberg, MD/California. New Officers:

- Susan Nelson MD - President, Louisiana
- Matt Kestenbaum MD - President-Elect/Treasurer, Virginia
- Cindy Munn MHA - Secretary, Louisiana
- Karl Steinberg, MD - Past President, California

Clinical News

Palliative care nurses see us in our final hours — these are the life lessons they've learnt

ABC News; by Iskhandar Razak; 6/29/24

Anne Myers was once confused and shaken by death. After more than a decade as a nurse, including in hospital ICUs, her mother died. "I'd seen a lot of deaths in my nursing life, but it was the closest human to me that had died," she said. "It kind of sent me down a 'oh my god, I don't know what's happening to me', this grief I'm experiencing." Soon afterwards, she became a palliative care nurse. "I ended up just going down the path of 'what is death, what is death and dying all about?'" she recalled. More than 15 years later, here's what she and other palliative care nurses have discovered on how to die well and live well.

- Dead people visit you before you die--and if that happens, go with it ...
- At the end, some patients hold on until they're ready ...
- Beautiful things happen--but people don't change ...
- Live your life now ...

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Empowering ‘deeply undervalued’ caregivers would improve ‘lifeline for older adults’

McKnights Senior Living; by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 6/28/24

Direct care workers and family caregivers remain “deeply undervalued” and often overlooked despite calls for investment in the care economy, according to the authors of a new report. “These caregivers provide a lifeline for older adults, people with disabilities, and people living with chronic conditions,” PHI and the National Alliance for Caregiving said in an issue brief released Wednesday. “Empowering them in their roles will help to ensure high quality, responsive care to meet the needs and preferences of millions of Americans now and in the future.” The organizations called on providers, Congress, the Department of Labor, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, states, managed care plans and advocates to invest in the “essential partnership” between direct care workers and family caregivers. The new brief includes insights from a variety of stakeholders ... The result is a list of recommendations that prioritize improvements to direct care jobs.

Editor's Note: Our sponsor, [Composing Life Out of Loss](#), equips hospice and palliative care organizations with caregiver education and support video libraries to strengthen

relationships between the direct care professional and the family caregiver, with timely information for the entire family. Contents are written to CMS CoPs, CAHPS, and contemporary grief research; English and Spanish.

Harn Art Museum encourages woman with Alzheimer's to move again

ABC TV WCJB-20; Gainesville, FL; by Kayla Lewis; 6/28/24

Pat Mclaurin's Alzheimer's has progressed since her daughter, Diana Dodds took her on a bucket list trip in 2022. ... "So my mom would never use a walker or a cane. She would be more likely to try to hit me with it then use it, so she's fiercely independent, yet she knows right now she cannot really walk without falling," Dodds shared. "She's always grabbing for walls just in the house." ... Pat used to walk 3-5 miles a day, but in January slowed down. They decided to test out their own walker on a trip to the Harn Museum of Art in Gainesville, but her mom didn't like it. However, the museum offers walkers and Pat loved them. Diana tells her it's like a shopping cart. "Four wheels, it has higher bars, it had brakes on it. It felt more like a shopping cart because of the seat," Dodds shared. Diana described the walker they gave her mother to Haven Hospice officials who then brought her mom a walker just like it a couple days later. "It's inspiring because I've seen her push through every step trying to keep moving, and I want her to be able to keep moving," said Dodds.

Regulatory News

Lawmakers say CMS should ban Medicare Advantage's use of AI to deny care

McKnights Long-Term Care News; by Josh Henreckson; 6/26/24

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services should consider banning artificial intelligence from being used to deny Medicare Advantage coverage pending a "systematic review," a group of 49 congressional leaders is urging. ... Skilled nursing providers have been sounding the alarm for years on Medicare Advantage coverage access, especially when informed by AI and other algorithms. Sector leaders have frequently noted that these methods can deny or prematurely end coverage for patients who need it to afford necessary long-term care. Providers and consumer advocates both spoke out in favor of the lawmakers' letter this week. "LeadingAge's nonprofit and mission driven members ... have firsthand experience of Medicare Advantage (MA) plans'

inappropriate use of prior authorization to deny, shorten and limit MA enrollees' access to medically necessary Medicare benefits," wrote Katie Smith Sloan, president and CEO of LeadingAge. ... "Implementation by [the] Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which we fully support, would ensure MA plans fulfill their obligation to provide enrollees equitable access to Medicare services."



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Public Policy News

Medical Aid in Dying and the “slippery slope” argument

Psychiatric Times; by Douglas W. Heinrichs, MD; 7/1/24

Commentary: A mainstay for opponents of medical aid in dying (MAID) for the terminally ill has long been the slippery slope argument. Rather than argue directly against MAID for the terminally ill, which puts them at odds with the majority of US citizens and physicians, they argue that MAID should be rejected because it will inevitably lead to unacceptable expansions to other populations. They say it will expand from the terminally medically ill, to non-terminal medically ill patients with intractable pain and suffering, to advanced directives for dementia, to psychiatric patients with intractable mental pain and suffering, or to anyone who simply finds life unbearable. It is best, they argue, to stop this by opposing the first step.

Editor's Note: We do not provide this article to promote this author's conclusions, but rather to raise awareness of key issues that are being examined by individuals, by healthcare professionals, and legislators in many US states and numerous international countries.

Mergers & Acquisition News

Midland Care Connection and VNA KC form innovative partnership

Press release; 7/1/24

Topeka, KS - Effective July 1, 2024, the Visiting Nurse Association Kansas City (VNA

KC), one of the oldest home health agencies in the nation, will affiliate with Midland Care Connection. This partnership aims to create a more robust regional continuum of care.

Technology / Innovations News

Why nurses are protesting AI

Healthcare Brew; by Tom McKay; 6/26/24

Continuous data collection and analysis is hardly a replacement for knowledge, nursing unions say, and sometimes gets in the way of care. The largest nursing union in the US, National Nurses United (NNU), is sounding the alarm about the use of AI in healthcare. In April, the union's affiliate California Nurses Association (CNA) protested an AI conference helmed by managed care consortium Kaiser Permanente. Like workers in other sectors who are worried about AI encroachment, the nurses fear that the tech is contributing to the devaluation of their skills amid what they say is already a "chronic" understaffing crisis, nurses reported in an NNU survey of 2,300 registered nurses and members in early 2024. But the NNU, which represents approximately 225,000 nurses across the country, also claims healthcare operators are using AI hype as a pretext to rush half-baked and potentially harmful technologies into service, says Michelle Mahon, NNU's assistant director of nursing practice.



General News

Report: Healthcare needs to diversify workforce to get rid of racial inequalities

MedPage Today - Public Health & Policy - Equity in Medicine; by Associated Press; 6/26/24

"Inequities are baked into our healthcare system," says one expert. Racial and ethnic inequities in healthcare are found in every state in the U.S. despite the passage of legislation intended to improve health outcomes for minorities and increased awareness of healthcare disparities over the past two decades, according to a new national report released Wednesday. The 300-plus-page document from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine detailed how structural racism and people's surroundings have contributed to worse health outcomes for minorities. It also offers recommendations and solutions to healthcare organizations and the federal government, like a more diverse workforce and adjusting payment systems to make healthcare more affordable.

International News

Opposing views shared on assisted dying proposals

BBC News, Isle of Man; by Rebecca Brahde; 7/1/24

Protesters both for and against proposed assisted dying laws on the Isle of Man have shared their views, ahead of an extra sitting of the House of Keys. Politicians will continue to debate legislation on Monday that would allow terminally-ill people the right to die. Millie Blenkinsop-French, from Douglas, said: "I think it is time now for us to have that choice." But Karen Owen said "one person's choice impinges on another's" and would lead to families having to have "terrifying" conversations as the end of life approaches. If the legislation is approved, there will be strict eligibility criteria: People who request an assisted death will have to be over 18, have lived on the island for at least five years and have been told by doctors they have less than 12 months to live. ... Public opinion was narrowly divided on the issue in a consultation held in April 2023 where more than 3,000 people shared their views.

Editor's Note: The Isle of Man is a self-governing British Crown Dependency in the Irish Sea, between Great Britain and Ireland. We post this international article as a sample of the international scope of this extremely controversial issue, paired with similarities in different beliefs and opinions.

Swiss couple walk 1,000 miles to Perranporth in Cornwall to support children's hospices

Voice; by Andrew Townsend; 6/29/24

A couple have walked 1,000 miles from Switzerland to Cornwall to raise money for children's hospices. Retired Swiss professor Rainer Zust, 65, and his partner Stephanie, and their two dogs Leo and Nettie covered the distance in 69 days, finishing the trek in Perranporth. Whilst walking in the UK, the couple raised around £1,000 for Children's Hospice South West (CHSW). And while in Cornwall they visited the Little Harbour Children's Hospice at St Austell.



Today's Encouragement

May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right. - Peter Marshall



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