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Hospice Provider News

[CHAP] Understanding the Certificate of Need (CON)

CHAP - From the CHAP Boardroom; by Michael Rovinsky, CHAP BoD & VP of Strategic Planning; email 7/12/24

Navigating regulatory frameworks is crucial for community-based healthcare organizations looking to initiate or expand their services. The Certificate of Need (CON) stands as a pivotal regulatory tool in this endeavor, playing a significant role in the planning and delivery of healthcare services. In today's discussion from the CHAP Boardroom, we delve into the Certificate of Need, exploring its implications and its influence on the landscape of community-based care.

- What is a Certificate of Need?
- The Rationale Behind CON Laws
- Criticism of CON Laws
- CON Laws by State
- Typical CON Submission and Review Process
- Review Criteria for a CON Application
- View Certificate of Need State Laws

Editor's Note: CHAP, the Community Health Accreditation Partner is a sponsor for Hospice & Palliative Care Today.

Amorem receives \$100,000 grant from The Cannon Foundation

Ashe Post & Times, Boone, North Carolina; by Staff Reporter; 7/12/24

Amorem received a \$100,000 grant from The Cannon Foundation for its Quality. Compassion. Support: A Patient Care Unit for the High Country campaign. The Cannon Foundation has joined Amorem's vision to provide more quality, more compassion and more support to residents of the High Country with a \$100k grant to assist with the purchase of non-medical equipment needed to operate the patient care unit and meet the needs of patients and their families while in Amorem's care. "Amorem is honored that The Cannon Foundation has joined our vision," says Director of Development, Ashley Edwards. "Through this partnership, Amorem is empowered to create a homelike environment for our patients who are facing the end of life and their families at the High Country patient care unit."

Hospice of North Idaho receives \$30K donation

Coeur d'Alene / Post Falls Press, St. Coeru D'Alene, Idaho; 7/13/24

Coldwell Banker Schneidmiller Realty recently donated \$30,000 to Hospice of North Idaho to support the Schneidmiller House Inpatient Hospice Unit. The donation will help ensure the continued provision of world-class end-of-life care to the community, a press release said. "The gift of our Hospice House and our exemplary care for those we serve is actually a gift from all those in our community that support our mission as Coldwell Banker has today," said Eric Ladwig, executive director of Hospice of North Idaho. Robert Brickett, vice-president of Coldwell Banker Schn eidmiller Realty, said they were honored to contribute to Hospice of North Idaho and support the exceptional care they provide. "Our company believes in giving back to the community that has supported us for so many years," he said.

Angela Hospice CEO to retire; successor named

DBusiness; by Tim Keenan; 7/12/24

Angela Hospice President and CEO Marti Coplai has announced her plan to retire in December and Executive Director Jamie LaLonde has been named to succeed her in December. Coplai joined Angela Hospice in 2015 as executive director and assumed the position of president and CEO in March 2019. Over the course of Coplai's tenure, she has led the Angela Hospice team to accomplish a number of initiatives, propelling the organization to where it is today, and ensuring sustainability for the future. The most recent initiative Coplai led is the expansion of Angela Hospice services to north Oakland County. In addition to the 15-bed hospice residence at Lourdes Senior Community, expanded services will benefit the community through grief support groups and educational outreach.

Lewiston community honors shooting and hospice victims with butterfly release celebration

CBS WGME TV13, Lewiston, Maine; by Aysia Reed; 7/13/24

Hundreds of butterflies took flight in Lewiston on Saturday for the 15th annual Butterfly Release Celebration hosted by Andwell Health Partners. Hundreds of names were read off Saturday at the Geiger Elementary School in Lewiston to honor those who have died in hospice. And this year the names of Lewiston mass shooting victims were honored too. The event is put on by Andwell Health Partners, a Maine healthcare nonprofit providing services for hospice patients

and their families. Once names were read, one thousand monarch butterflies were released- a symbol of transformation and hope.

Editor's Note: [On October 25, 2023 in Lewiston, Maine](#), 18 individuals died and 13 others were injured by a shooter at a bowling alley and restaurant.

Wellsboro's hospice home closes

Gazette, Wellsboro, Pennsylvania; 7/12/24

After 25 years of providing a home for the dying, The Samaritan House, a mission project of St. Peter's Church in Wellsboro [PA], has closed. For the past two years, the steering committee has tried to increase its volunteer base, raise funds, complete clearances and maintain the house. Despite meeting many goals and continuing to receive referrals, Samaritan House can no longer welcome guests because it can't sustain a schedule. The Samaritan House ministry has welcomed guests and families from diverse faiths and backgrounds and cared for them with compassion and dignity for 25 years. Many of the volunteers have made friends and memories that will last a lifetime.

Palliative Care Provider News

Palliative care training initiative launches to improve quality among incarcerated populations

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 7/12/24

The California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation's Medical Facility (CMF) has launched a new palliative spiritual care training program aimed at improving services for incarcerated individuals. The new two-week spiritual training program was recently provided to palliative care service workers and volunteers to assist CMF's clinical and nursing staff caring for patients at the facility's hospice, correctional treatment center and memory care units. A dozen trainees recently completed the program, with CMF planning to provide an annual refresher course to all of its palliative care service workers, according to California Correctional Health Care Services CEO Joseph Garland.

Editor's Note: One of the top read articles we've posted in 2024 has been ["Death and redemption in an American prison,"](#) telling the story of Angola Prison's first hospice inmate care, from the experiences of Steven Garner; posted in our newsletter on 2/20/2024 and in our Sunday's Top Read Stories 3/3/2024.

Clinical News

Children experiencing grief can build coping skills with library storytime

The Mountaineer, Waynesville, NC; by Jennifer Stuart; 7/13/24

Seasons of Grief Storytime will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, July 21, at the Canton Branch of the Haywood County Public Library. This is a story time that aims to reach out to children experiencing grief, being held in partnership with Haywood Hospice and Palliative Care. The group will read a story and create a personalized keepsake. It is a program ideal for ages 5-10. The program is free, but registration is required.

Editor's Note: This simple, meaningful support for children can be replicated easily with other local libraries, schools, community/faith groups. Another adaptation with pet therapy dogs is for the child to read the story to the dog. This technique empowers the child to be the "teller"--the keeper--of the story, with the adult(s) present to support, validate, ask questions, and encourage the child in his/her own timing and ownership of one's own story. (Come on readers! Click on this article's title to get it into our "Top Reads" for the week!)

Regulatory News

The Medicare Post-Acute Care and Hospice Provider Public Use File (PAC PUF)

CMS press release; 7/10/24

[This file] provides information on services provided to Medicare beneficiaries by home health agencies (HHAs), hospices, skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRFs), and long-term care hospitals (LTCHs). It contains information on demographic and clinical characteristics of beneficiaries served, professional and paraprofessional service utilization, submitted charges, and payments at the provider, state, and national levels. Additionally, the PAC PUF include s payment information at the case-mix grouping level for HHAs, SNFs, and IRFs.

Glitzy Scottsdale couple jailed in \$900M fraud

Gilbert Sun News; by Tom Scanlon; 7/14/24

... According to a federal indictment, "Alexandra Gehrke and Jeffrey King were charged for targeting elderly Medicare patients, many of whom were terminally

ill in hospice care, for medically unnecessary wound grafts.” Gehrke – known to friends and associates as “Lexie” – and King allegedly filed \$900 million in fraudulent claims, pocketing “\$330 million in illegal kickbacks as a result of their fraudulent scheme.” According to the indictment, they were responsible for “allograft” ban dages being applied frivolously to hundreds of patients, many of them dying. According to Gehrke’s LinkedIn profile, “APEX Medical is a national medical device distribution company.

Public Policy News

Hospice CARES Act would update medical reviews, seek to reduce audits

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 7/12/24

The forthcoming Hospice Care Accountability, Reform and Enforcement (Hospice CARE) Act from U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenaur (D-Oregon), if enacted, would implement a number of changes to medical review processes. ... Though the bill language is still in development, it will likely contain proposed updates to payment mechanisms for high-acuity palliative services, changes to the per-diem payment process and actions to improve quality and combat fraud. The bill would also implement a temporary, national moratorium on the enrollment of new hospices into Medicare , to help stem the tide of fraudulent activities among recently established providers concentrated primarily in California, Arizona, Texas and Nevada. ... Among the anticipated provisions of the bill would be an item requiring the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to use documentation in a patient’s medical record as supporting material. The documentation would include the reasons that an attending physician certified a patient for hospice and establish a six-month terminal prognosis.

Research News

Report shows substantial financial opportunity in prioritizing research, education on women’s heart health

Pharmacy Times; by Alexandra Gerlach; 7/13/24

A report published by authors from the American Heart Association (AHA) and the McKinsey Health Institute showed that addressing the gender gaps prevalent in the treatment of cardiovascular disease (CVD) could boost the US economy by \$28 billion annually by 2040 and potentially address the 1.6 million years of life

lost due to barriers to care experienced by women. The paper identifies multiple pathways to addressing the lack of representation and access to care for women with CVD... CVD is the leading cause of death in women in the United States, affecting nearly 60 million individuals, and it makes up over a third of the health gap between men and women.

Mergers & Acquisition News

20 massive physician group deals shaping the industry

Becker's ASC Review; by Patsy Newitt; 7/12/24

Facing increasing obstacles to access economies of scale, including rising practice costs and decreasing reimbursement, physician groups are increasingly consolidating. Here are [several of the] 20 physician group deals [listed that have been] shaping the industry since 2022:

- Amazon ...
- Ascend Capital Partners ...
- CVS Health ...
- OneOncology ...
- Optum ...
 - In 2023, Optum **merged** with Amedisys, a home health and hospice provider, in a deal valued at \$3.26 billion.
 - In 2022, Optum **acquired** home healthcare business LHC Group for around \$5.4 billion. Lafayette, La.-based LHC Group offers in-home health and hospice care from 964 locations in 37 states.
- Walgreens

Post-Acute Care News

Cherokee nation: Closing gap in health care disparities

Native News Online; by Churck Hoskin, Jr.; 7/14/24

... American Indians in Oklahoma die on average 17 years earlier than their non-Indigenous neighbors. While this finding is alarming, it comes as no surprise to the Cherokee Nation or to the nearly 40 other tribal nations in Oklahoma. ... Even as we continue our advocacy efforts, we cannot afford to wait for the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities. That's why the Cherokee Nation, which operates the largest Native American health care system in the country, is taking

unprecedented steps to address this crisis head-on. ... [We] are confident our historic investments in health care and wellness are improving health outcomes for our Cherokee citizens. Construction continues on the Cherokee Nation's new \$400 million, 400,000-square-foot state-of-the-art hospital being built in the capital city of Tahlequah. The new hospital will include an ER, surgery, ICU, imaging, pharmacy and lab, neo-natal ICU, hospice, dietary and acute care, and many other services.

Today's Encouragement

It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light.

~ Aristotle



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