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From: Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter
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Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2024 4:00 AM
To: Cordt Kassner
Subject: Your Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter for 07/25/24

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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

July 25th, 2024

Contents

Hospice Provider News

- [1. NAHC President Bill Dombi: Hospices in for a 'bumpy ride to new era'](#)
- [2. Show You Care: 10-year-old donates profits from greenhouse to hospice unit](#)
- [3. Amorem names new Chief Executive Officer](#)

Palliative Care Provider News

- [4. Palliative care benefit work group](#)

Clinical News

- [5. 'My sibling died and my parents never talked about her again'](#)
- [6. Sasha McAllum Pilkington on grace and storytelling at the end of life](#)
- [7. Acupuncture as a support in palliative care at Sun City Center HAW](#)

Regulatory News

8. [Why home health providers should expect to see a 'less draconian' final payment rule](#)
9. [Medicare physician pay has plummeted since 2001. Find out why.](#)

Post-Acute Care News

10. [Making DEI matter in post-acute care](#)

General News

11. [Rady Children's Hospital nurses strike begins after union turns down deal](#)
12. [UVM Medical Center reaches new contract for nursing employees, 23% wage hike](#)

Education

13. [Education curricula need to incorporate whole-person care beyond electives](#)

International News

14. [\[Bermuda\] New hospice care centre breaks ground](#)

Today's Encouragement

15. [Today's Encouragement: Nothing can substitute for ...](#)

Hospice Provider News

NAHC President Bill Dombi: Hospices in for a 'bumpy ride to new era'

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 7/23/24

The Medicare Hospice Benefit is ripe for change nearly four decades after its establishment, but moving the needle will include a heavy lift around evolving regulations. This is according to Bill Dombi, president of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC). The hospice industry is undergoing tremendous changes amid rising demand and increased regulatory oversight, Dombi said at NAHC's Financial Management Conference in Las Vegas.

..."[Hospice] hospice has moved into a new era. It's a very mature benefit at this point and all signs are that people in Congress and at [the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)] think it's overdue for some reform. Hospice is facing potential massive reform." Among the signs of major reform on the horizon is an intensified survey and [auditing climate](#) in recent years, Dombi stated.

Show You Care: 10-year-old donates profits from greenhouse to hospice unit

ABC KCRG TV 9, Alburnett, IO; by Emily Schrad; 7/21/24

A 10-year-old girl in Alburnett has turned her green thumb into a way to give

back. Meet Becca Banes. She's just 10 years old and is running a business: Becca's Greenhouse and Nursery. "I just like to watch stuff grow," said Becca. Once a year she does a big sale with flowers, trees and produce. "How many plants do you have?" asked TV9's Emily Schrad, "Mmmmm... Probably 300," said Becca. But for Becca, the Greenhouse isn't just a hobby. "I like to donate because I like to help people and they have all helped my family somehow," she said. Each year she chooses one place where she donates some of her profits. And her most recent donation, \$400 to UnityPoint Health St. Luke's Hospice Unit, hits close to home. "We had our last sleepover with my grandpa before he passed away in there, ..." Becca said.

AMOREM names new Chief Executive Officer

WKSK 93.5 West Jefferson, NC; 7/23/24

On Monday evening, the AMOREM Board of Directors named April Moore as the organization's new chief executive officer. Moore began her career in hospice in 2004 ... with Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care, which integrated with Burke Hospice and Palliative Care in 2021 to form AMOREM. ... Since the integration, she oversaw the building project for AMOREM's palliative care center in Boone. She currently leads the building project for AMOREM's patient care unit in Boone, set to open in early 2025. ... "The Board of Directors is thrilled to announce the hiring of April Moore as CEO of AMOREM," AMOREM Board of Directors Chairman Jordan Greene ... "April has shown 20 years of leadership, dedication and love for our organization. Her commitment to the mission, vision and values of AMOREM is second to none. April is the definition of the hospice heart."



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Palliative Care Provider News

Palliative care benefit work group

Office of the Insurance Commissioner - Washington State; 7/23/24

The Washington state Legislature has directed the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, in consultation with the Health Care Authority, to convene a work

group to design the parameters of a palliative care benefit and payment model for fully insured health plans. The work group must submit a report to the Legislature detailing its work and any recommendations by November 1, 2025. The work group must consider the following elements of a palliative care benefit:

- Clinical eligibility criteria;
- The services included in a palliative care benefit;
- Appropriate staffing, including staffing models and provider training;
- Evaluation criteria and reporting requirements; and
- Payment models.

Editor's Note: Washington state's work group follows in the steps of Hawai'i new palliative care benefit. For reference, see the article we posted on 6/5/24 and again 6/9/24 (Sunday's Top Read Articles): [Hawai'i is the first state to provide palliative care coverage](#).

Clinical News

'My sibling died and my parents never talked about her again'

The Telegraph; by Steph Clarkson; 7/20/24

Julia Martin has few memories of her sister Karen, but remembers the last time she saw her. "She was five years old. I was seven. We were playing on the swing in the park. Then she went off to the hospital with Mum and Dad for a scheduled operation. "She never came home." Losing a sibling is tragic enough, but for Julia the death of her sister following an operation to repair a hole in the heart was just the start of years of trauma. "I remember my father telling me Karen had died," says Julia, ... "But that was it. There were no hugs, no comforting words. "Mum barely came near me. She tucked herself away. I had no other siblings to talk to. I was alone." Things got worse as Julia's parents built a wall of silence around their loss: "I wasn't taken to see Karen in the hospital, I was kept away from the funeral, so there was no closure," she says.

Sasha McAllum Pilkington on grace and storytelling at the end of life

Psychotherapy.net; by Lawrence Rubin; 7/22/24

Narrative Clinician, Sasha McAllum Pilkington [of New Zealand], shares poignant

stories she co-created with hospice clients which honor and celebrate their lives. [This interview includes: ...

- Meaning Making in the Shadow of Death ...
- "I think being alongside people who are dying, and their loved ones, is very important. When I speak of being 'alongside,' I am referring to supporting a person to reflect on their experience and what matters to them in ways where they experience themselves as worthy of respect and holding knowledge about their own life. I think recognizing our shared humanity is significant in working with people who are seriously ill and approaching death."
- Narrative Therapy: Discourses Around Death and Dying ...
- Building Meaning at the Threshold of Death ... A Therapist Reflects on Early and Ongoing Influences ...

For review of Sasha Pilington's other works, visit the [Journal of Contemporary Narrative Therapy \(JCNT\)](#).

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Acupuncture as a support in palliative care at Sun City Center HAW

The Tidewater News, Ruskin, FL; 7/22/24

Sun City Center Health and Wellness (HAW) is dedicated to providing comprehensive care for patients managing serious illnesses, championing the use of acupuncture as a key supportive treatment in palliative care. This practice, grounded in traditional Chinese medicine, offers relief from common symptoms and enhances overall well-being. ... The role of acupuncture in palliative care is

gaining recognition for its potential to improve the quality of life for patients dealing with serious illnesses.

Regulatory News

Why home health providers should expect to see a 'less draconian' final payment rule

Home Health Care News; by Joyce Famakinwa; 7/22/24

As home health providers continue to digest the proposed payment rule for 2025, National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) President William A. Dombi believes that the industry will ultimately see a comparatively toned down final rule. "We believe we will not end up with this proposed rule as a final rule," he said during the opening presentation at NAHC's Financial Management Conference in Las Vegas on Sunday. "We will end up with something less draconian. The cuts will be reduced because, No. 1, that's what they've done for the last several years, and, No. 2, it's an election year." Even with a prediction of a "less draconian" final payment rule, NAHC is still gearing up to fight against home health cuts and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) payment-setting methodologies.

Medicare physician pay has plummeted since 2001. Find out why.

American Medical Association - AMA; by Tanya Albert Henry; 7/17/24

Medicare physician payment—often called Medicare reimbursement—must be tied to an inflation index called the Medicare Economic Index (MEI). As part of its campaign to fix the unsustainable Medicare pay system, the AMA has outlined in a quick, easily navigable fashion why this payment fix needs to happen now. ... The AMA's two-page explainer on the Medicare Economic Index (PDF) outlines how it incorporates these two categories reflecting the resources used in medical practices:

- Physician practice costs ...
- Physician compensation ...

... The AMA is leading the charge to reform the Medicare payment system.



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Post-Acute Care News

Making DEI matter in post-acute care

HomeCare Magazine; by Jerry Farmer; 7/18/24

In today's dynamic health care landscape, the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) cannot be overstated. DEI represents policies and procedures that promote the representation and participation of diverse groups of individuals who encompass all ages, races, ethnicities, abilities, disabilities, genders, religions, cultures and sexual orientations. ... Here are some of the key factors our company focused to reach diversity, equity and inclusion milestones:

- Executive leadership training ...
- We partnered with SAGECare to educate the hospice leadership team and hospice staff annually in areas such as LGBTQ+ elderly care ...
- The organization spearheaded bias training initiatives ...
- We established a Culture and Inclusion Council made up of team members from diverse backgrounds ...

As a result of these initiatives, AccentCare has observed a measurable increase in employee engagement (a 6% increase year over year) and participant satisfaction scores of 90 for training.

General News

Rady Children's Hospital nurses strike begins after union turns down deal

ABC News 10 San Diego, CA; by Perla Shaheen, Dani Miskell; 7/23/24

The Rady Children's Hospital nurses started hitting the picket line Monday morning. The union representing the nurses recently turned down the hospital's

offer of a 25% pay bump over the next three years. The executive director for UNOCH Teamsters Local 1699 says this is the first time they've ever gone on strike. On Sunday, both sides thought they had a deal and would avoid the strike, but late last night, union members voted the agreement down.

UVM Medical Center reaches new contract for nursing employees, 23% wage hike

VB Vermont Biz; by The University of Vermont Medical Center; 7/22/24

Nurses employed by University of Vermont Medical Center who are part of the Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (VFNHP) voted to ratify a new three-year contract for nursing staff this past weekend. The contract includes a 23% wage increase for nurses over the next three years.



Education

Education curricula need to incorporate whole-person care beyond electives

Pharmacy Times; by Ashely Gallaher; 7/21/24

"[Whole-person care is] simply caring for a person and not just their pills. It's making sure that we're focusing on medications as tools to help people live better, healthier lives, and not as the focus of their lives," Kshelle Lockman,

PharmD, MA, clinical assistant professor and clinical pharmacy specialist at the University of Iowa. ... 3 Key Takeaways:

- Pharmacists should be educated to deliver whole-person care, considering a patient's physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs.
- Experts recommend that the current pharmacy school curricula incorporate case studies that depict real-life patients and explore whole-person care.
- Language used to describe patients should be person-centered, respectful, and avoid stereotypes.

International News

[Bermuda] New hospice care centre breaks ground

Bernews, Bermuda; 7/22/24

The future of hospice care in Bermuda has taken a leap forward with the groundbreaking on the site of the new Woodland Grove Care Centre on Spice Hill Road, Warwick. A spokesperson said, "Community partners and board members of Friends of Hospice were present to mark the symbolic first shovel-strike of the multi-year construction of Bermuda's first purpose-built hospice and eldercare care facility. The Care Centre will significantly increase and improve on the care options available on island. ... The building will have an aesthetic character heavily inspired by traditional Bermudian residential character, massing, and vernacular. The provision of functional gardens and landscaped outdoor areas, around the building, contribute to the home environment and will offer tranquil and calming spaces.

Today's Encouragement

Nothing can substitute for just plain hard work. I had to put in the time to get back. And it was a grind. It meant training and sweating every day. But I was completely committed to working out to prove to myself that I still could do it. ~ Andre Agassi, USA Tennis, 1996 Olympic gold medalist



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