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July 26th, 2024

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Headlines

Hospice driving 'die-ologue' series sparks end-of-life conversations

OrilliaMatters; by Giesele Winton Sarvis; 7/21/24

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld was the inspiration for Driving Die-alogues created by Hospice Huronia [Ontario, Canada]. Debbie Kesheshian, executive director of Hospice Huronia, and Tammy Vater, the supportive care coordinator, were trying to think of a way to normalize conversation around the often taboo subject of death and dying. They decided to follow Seinfeld's model with his show Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee, where Seinfeld picks up a fellow comedian and they have a chat while going for coffee. "Tammy and I thought let's go for a drive and have a conversation that is just normal and human. She and I ask a question and we go back and forward with open dialogue," says Kesheshian. A year later, the duo have created approximately 30 short videos posted on YouTube and the Hospice website and they plan on creating more.

Editor's Note: Happy Friday with this fun, creative community outreach from our northern neighbor!

Hospice Provider News

How home-based care's leaders foster a multi-generational workforce

Home Health Care News; by Joyce Famakinwa; 7/23/24

In order for the home-based care space to benefit from the demographic tailwinds coming its way, it needs to embrace emerging leaders who are bringing in fresh ideas. VNS Health, Andwell Health Partners and UVA Continuum Home Health are just a few of the companies that are throwing their support behind the next generation of leaders. ... Formerly Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice, Andwell is a nonprofit operator that offers home health, hospice, palliative, behavioral health and pediatric care services. The company employs over 500 workers across all 16 counties in Maine. Along with cultivating the next crop of leaders, companies are figuring out how best to work with a multi-generational workforce.

5 evolving trends on end-of-life matters

The Leavenworth Echo, Wenatchee, WA; 7/21/24

One of the most difficult conversations many people have in their lives involves the end of life. While often uncomfortable to think about or discuss with others, talking about and sharing end-of-life wishes should be a common occurrence. In fact, 91% of Americans believe talking about death and dying is healthy and normal, but 1 in 4 (27%) are uncomfortable actually doing it, according to a first-of-its-kind survey commissioned by the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), the world's leading and largest funeral service association. ... *[Click on the title's link for more about these evolving trends:]*

- Talking about death ...
- Preferences for burial and cremation ...
- Importance of funerals ...
- Comfort with the idea of death ...
- Communicating preferred funeral plans ...



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Over a hundred motorcyclists parade through Twin Falls to honor local hospice patient

KMVT-11, Twin Falls, ID; by Cole Quinn; 7/22/24

The roar of over one hundred motorbikes swept through Twin Falls on Sunday afternoon. Motorcyclists from as far away as Boise and Pocatello joined in for a parade, all dedicated to one man. Thomas Willie is a 74-year-old hospice patient with Harrison's Hope Hospice Family in Twin Falls, a non-profit with a wish program for their patients. ... "It was one hundred percent texting, I think there was some social media, it was one hundred percent a who-you-know sort of thing," said Devin Berna I, Director of Clinical Services. "Our team in Meridian and our team here in Twin Falls they just got busy and started reaching out to people."

Southern California doctor defrauded over \$3.2 million from Medicare

KTLA; by Vivian Chow; 7/24/24

A Southern California doctor was convicted of defrauding Medicare out of millions of dollars through a multi-year scheme. Victor Contreras, 68, of Santa Paula, worked for two Pasadena hospices, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. From July 2016 to February 2019, Contreras and an accomplice, Juanita Antenor, 61, worked to defraud Medicare by submitting nearly \$4 million in fraudulent claims for hospice services, officials said. The hospice companies — Arcadia Hospice Provider Inc. and Saint Mariam Hospice Inc. — were controlled by Antenor.

Hospice House of Williamsburg halts admissions for 3 months during renovations

WHRO; by Nick McNamara; 7/18/24

Hospice House of Williamsburg is pausing admissions while the facility enters the final phase of renovations. Hospice House has provided end-of-life care and support for upwards of 150 guests annually since its facility opened in 2002. More than 3,000 people have stepped through its Powhatan Parkway doors in that time. And it did it all free of charge, according to Executive Director Brandon Randall. ... To meet that mission, the nonprofit relies on community donations to the tune of \$1 million per year. Donations are also what made Hospice House's renovations possible. ... The final phase of renovations starts in July and is

expected to be complete in 12 weeks. During that time, staff will continue offering bereavement support services.

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Clinical News

AMA Advocacy issue briefs

American Medical Association; 7/24/24

Issue briefs summarize key health policy issues by providing concise and easily digestible content targeting both relevant stakeholders and those who may know little about the topic. Contents: Medicare & Medicaid; Telehealth; Scope of practice; Prior authorization; Reducing physician burnout; Practice management; Overdose and mental health/substance use disorder parity; Access to affordable, high-value care; Health care costs & price transparency; Drug costs & pricing; Hospitals & health systems; State medical liability reform; LGBTQ+ health; The business of medicine; Public health improvement; Essential Tools & Resources.

Public Policy News

[NJ] Governor Murphy signs "Louisa Carman Medical Debt Relief Act"

Official Site of the State of New Jersey; 7/22/24

Governor Phil Murphy today signed the Louisa Carman Medical Debt Relief Act which will help New Jersey families avoid falling into medical debt and protect individuals from predatory medical debt collectors. The Louisa Carman Medical Debt Relief Act is named in honor of a member of the Governor's Office who helped craft the proposal before tragically passing away in a car accident on New Year's Day at the age of 25. Joined by Louisa's family and advocates, the

Governor signed the bill, advancing his Administration's efforts to make New Jersey's health care system more accessible and more affordable for more people.

Post-Acute Care News

[Michigan] Local PACE center in the works

WCMU Michigan News Group, Alpena, MI; by Courtney Boyd; 7/24/24

Construction has begun for a new senior service center in Alpena, which will provide services in-house and to residents homes as needed. The project has been in the works since 2023. The Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) is a non-profit organization whose goal is to provide the "highest quality of life" for seniors while allowing them to stay independent as long as possible. According to their website, pacemichigan.com, it serves as an alternative to nursing homes by providing seniors with their medical, social, and physical needs. ... [This] new center will be the 15th in the state and cover five counties: Alpena, Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alcona and parts of Iosco.



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Technology / Innovations News

A 'TsunamAI' of change is coming to healthcare

Forbes; by Lee Shapiro; 7/24/24

In the last 50 years, there have been significant developments that have forever improved the delivery of healthcare. Consider imaging (MRI/CT scans), minimally invasive surgery, anti-viral therapies, precision medicine (e.g., CRISPR and gene editing) and near or complete eradication of diseases like polio and smallpox. As we look back 50 years from now, we will have experienced seismic changes from AI. When I've spoken with healthcare leaders, they've pointed to a progression of

AI adoption that will occur in the following three categories, which you should consider for your organization: administrative, research and development, and care delivery.

Can Artificial Intelligence speak for incapacitated patients at the end of life?

JAMA Internal Medicine; by Teva D. Brender, MD; Alexander K. Smith, MD; Brian L. Block, MD; 7/22/24

Viewpoint: Imagine meeting with the daughter of a critically ill patient. The patient (her mother) had a cardiac arrest, is in multiorgan failure, and cannot communicate. The daughter is uncomfortable making decisions because they are estranged and never discussed what her mother would want in this type of situation. The patient has no advance directive or alternative surrogate. Now imagine this meeting taking place in a future where the mother's medical visits have been audio recorded. Furthermore, you have access to an artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm that can identify and play excerpts of the mother talking about what mattered most to her. You and the daughter listen to these recordings together. Then you share that another algorithm, trained on 7 million patient records, predicts that the mother's chance of walking again is less than 5%. ...

General News

'Green burials' grow in popularity as alternatives to traditional funerals

Planet Detroit; by Erica Hobbs; 7/24/24 |

... [Modern] funeral practices are wreaking havoc on the environment. Bodies are embalmed with toxic chemicals and buried in caskets placed in non-biodegradable vaults that take up increasingly limited space in cemeteries. According to a Cornell University [study](#), an estimated 4.3 million gallons of embalming fluid, 20 million feet of hardwood, 1.6 million tons of concrete and 64,500 tons of steel are used in American burials yearly. Even cremation — often thought of as a green alternative to burial — requires up to 500 gallons of fuel and releases up to 250 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, according to a [recent study](#) from the Green Burial Council (GBC). However, for those looking to reduce their carbon footprints even in death, green options,

though still relatively rare, are available in Michigan. ... [Click on the title's link to continue reading these descriptions of "green burials."]



International News

[“At home, even the walls help”: Exploring the palliative care needs, experiences, preferences, and hopes of older people with serious illness in Ukraine \(July 2024\)](#)

OCHA Services; by HelpAge; 7/24/24

Older Ukrainians living with serious illness face significant concerns and challenges within the political, environmental, and social context of the ongoing armed conflict, according to a new report published by HelpAge International, in partnership with HelpAge USA. ... The report highlights an innovative project funded by GlobalGiving which provides palliative care services in Ukraine. It underscores the profound challenges faced by older people due to the combined toll of disease and the ongoing war, and offers key recommendations to enhance their care and support. “Our findings reveal the unimaginable burden faced by older people living with serious illnesses in the midst of war. We are deeply grateful for the generous support of GlobalGiving, which has allowed us to highlight these issues and work to ensure that older people’s needs and

preferences are included in healthcare system planning during humanitarian crises," said Cindy Cox-Roman, CEO and president of HelpAge USA.

Other News

Executive Personnel Changes - 7/26/24

- Ascension Living, St. Louis, MO, has named Erin Shadbolt Chief Executive Officer
- Christian Village Communities announced
 - Larry Dean Monroe will retire as CEO/President, effective Dec. 27, 2024
 - Vickie Brashear will succeed Monroe as CEO/President
- HomeCare & Hospice and Total Senior Care named Chad Kirk as Chief Financial Officer
- Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS), based in Springfield, IL, welcomes
 - Mike Chanis as Chief Operating Officer of the Southern Illinois Market
 - Regina Peterson, DNP, RN a Chief Nursing Officer of the Southern Illinois Market
 - Teresa Cornelius, DNP, RN, was named chief administrative officer of HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville, IL, and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland, IL
 - Mandi Ennen, DNP, RN as Chief Administrative Officer of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Breese (IL)
- Humana's Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, William Fleming, PharmD, is leaving the company after a 30-year tenure
- LCH Health and Community Services, based in Kennet Square, PA, named Joseph Greco, MD, Chief Medical Officer; Dr. Greco has certificates in hospice and palliative care medicine

Today's Encouragement

Each of us has a fire in our hearts for something. It's our goal in life to find it and keep it lit. ~ Mary Lou Retton, American gymnast and 1984 five-time Olympic medalist

Editor's Note: May the lighting of the 2024 Olympic torch inspire us to find and keep our inner fires alive and well--individually and collectively.



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