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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

July 31st, 2024

Contents

Headlines

- [1. Medicare Program: FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update, Hospice Conditions of Participation Updates, and Hospice Quality Reporting Program Requirements](#)
- [2. Awards and Recognitions: July 2024](#)

Hospice Provider News

- [3. 'Good' death different for everyone](#)
- [4. Hospices build community partnerships to better serve patients, employees](#)
- [5. Video: Former MLB pitcher placed on hospice throws one last pitch at grandson's game](#)
- [6. Hospice market surge: Expected to hit \\$182.1 billion by 2033](#)

7. Hospice of the Valleys board members create custom edition wine to honor staff and volunteers

Clinical News

- 8. Loss of a loved one early in life may accelerate aging: Study
- 9. Proactive fall prevention: Elevating patient safety and healthcare excellence
- 10. A blood test accurately diagnosed Alzheimer's 90% of the time, study finds

Regulatory News

- 11. HHS unveils major revamp to shift health data, AI strategy and policy under ONC

Post-Acute Care News

- 12. Optum closing clinics, laying off 500+
- 13. Military veterans honored during special ceremony at Sarasota adult day center

Technology / Innovations News

14. Following the CrowdStrike outage, healthcare stresses the importance of prevention

General News

- 15. Another healthcare, pharmacy chain files Chapter 11 bankruptcy

Today's Encouragement

- 16. Today's Encouragement: I'd rather regret the risks ...

Headlines

Medicare Program: FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update, Hospice Conditions of Participation Updates, and Hospice Quality Reporting Program Requirements

Federal Register; 7/30/24

Highlights include finalization of a 2.9% increase in payment rate and Hospice Cap of \$34,465.34 for FY 2025.

Awards and Recognitions: July 2024

We congratulate these honorees and celebrate their contributions to our collective hospice and palliative care mission, vision, and compassionate care throughout our world. Do you know any of these leaders? We encourage you to forward this to them or to find another way to celebrate their success. (We are piloting this as a monthly feature in Hospice & Palliative Care Today.)

Organizations

- Curantis Solutions received the Great Place To Work Certification for the third year in a row by Great Place to Work and named to the 2024 Fortune Best Workplaces in Texas. Curantis Solutions provides comprehensive electronic health records software for hospice and palliative care providers who provide end-of-life care.
- Delaware Palliative, a subsidiary of Delaware Hospice, has achieved Joint Commission certification as a community-based palliative care provider, marking a significant milestone as the first organization in Delaware to receive this honor. This is in addition to The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Home Care Accreditation across all five of its hospice locations in Delaware and Pennsylvania.

Individuals

- Judi Lund Person, MPH, CHC, was honored with the Lifetime in Excellence Award by the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation [NPHI] for her remarkable advocacy efforts.
- Christy Whitney was awarded the Champion of End-of-Life Care Award by the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation [NPHI] in recognition of her visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing mission-driven end-of-life care.
- Tina Gentry, MHA, FACHE, CFRE, CLE, Chief Operating & Advancement Officer for Telios Collaborative Network (TCN), recently became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, the nation's leading professional society for healthcare leaders.
- Anne, Bash, Community Liaison for Hospice of the Valley, name a "Most Influential Women in Arizona Business 2024."
- Sandra DiScala, PharmD, BCPS, FAAHPM, director of the PGY-2 Pain Management and Palliative Care Pharmacy Residency and as a clinical

pharmacist practitioner for pain, palliative care, and geriatrics at the West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System (WPBVAHCS) in Florida, received the 2024 Fudin Award for Pain and Palliative Care Mentorship, presented by the Society of Pain & Palliative Care Pharmacists Foundation.

- Cathy Farmer, Director of Clinical Services at Goodwin House [Hospice] in Alexandria, has been named a 2024 Veteran VIP Honoree for Women of Distinction by McKnight's.
- R. Scott Nash, PhD, Mercer University religion professor received this year's EXPy Award for excellence in experiential learning for his class on death and dying, featuring learning activities such as volunteering with a hospice ... with the purpose of making death less abstract for students. Dr. Nash also received the 2024 Faculty of the Year Award from the Student Government Association.

Hospice Provider News

'Good' death different for everyone

Altoona Mirror, Altoona, PA; 7/26/24

The social and economic inequities patients suffer in life often shapes their death" was a key point of a July 13-14 article in the Review section of the Wall Street Journal. ... In the article, which was written by Dr. Sunita Puri, a palliative care physician and the author of "That Good Night: Life and Medicine in the Eleventh Hour," Puri focuses on the conundrum many families face when dealing with the question of where to spend the final days of life. ... "New research classifies the rise in home deaths as progress," the message immediately under the article's headline begins, "but we need to look more closely at what these deaths look like." ... Puri, now 10 years into her physician career, says it is now clear to her that there is much more to a "good" death than where it occurs. "Presuming a home death is a success obscures important questions about the process," she wrote. "Did this person die comfortably? Did their caregivers have the resources and guidance they needed? Was dying at home a choice or simply the only option?"



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Hospices build community partnerships to better serve patients, employees

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 7/29/24

Hospice care does not occur in a vacuum, and many operators find themselves building partnerships with other community organizations to better serve patients and support their staff. Providers work with other institutions to provide general inpatient and respite care, address social determinants of health and improve health equity, among other initiatives. Some also partner with medical and nursing schools to ensure students in health care fields gain exposure to hospice and palliative care principles.

Notable Mentions: Skell y Wingard, CEO of By the Bay Health; Mary Shankster, Chief Development Officer at Stillwater Hospice; Altonia Garrett, COO of Blue Ridge Hospice

Video: Former MLB pitcher placed on hospice throws one last pitch at grandson's game

Fox23 News, Tulsa, OK; 7/26/24

A former major league baseball pitcher, who was placed on hospice, threw one last pitch at his grandson's game in Owasso on Thursday. ... *[Click on the title's link for this inspiring video.]*

Hospice market surge: Expected to hit \$182.1 billion by 2033

Market.us Media; by Trishita Deb; 7/29/24

The global hospice market is projected to grow significantly from USD 72.8 billion in 2023 to around USD 182.1 billion by 2033, achieving a CAGR of 9.6%. This expansion is primarily driven by an aging population requiring increased palliative and end-of-life care. The demographic shift necessitates services that address chronic illnesses and provide compassionate care, predominantly offered by hospices. Additionally, technological advancements, particularly in telemedicine, facilitate broader access to comprehensive care, especially in remote areas. Interdisciplinary approaches in palliative care are also pivotal,

involving collaborative efforts from doctors, nurses, social workers, and chaplains. This holistic method not only enhances the quality of care but also boosts patient and family satisfaction, key metrics in healthcare evaluations.

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Hospice of the Valleys board members create custom edition wine to honor staff and volunteers

Valley News, Murrieta, CA; 7/26/24

Hospice of the Valleys board member Rob Crisell and his wife, Dr. Monisha Crisell, have created a custom edition wine selection titled “Last Companion” in honor of the staff and volunteers of Hospice of the Valleys. “Crisell Vineyards dedicates this blend of sangiovese (70%) and montepulciano (30%) to Hospice of the Valleys, whose devoted nurses, doctors, staff and volunteers embody that organization’s mission to foster reverence for life, relief of suffering and compassion in loss for the terminally ill residents of our community. Salute!” the Crisells said. The Crisells have donated several cases of this special wine blend for this year’s 26th annual Wine & Chocolate ... signature fundraiser.

Clinical News

Loss of a loved one early in life may accelerate aging: Study

The Hill - Health Care; by Miranda Nazzaro; 7/29/24

The experience of losing a loved one early in life could make a person age faster, according to a new study published Monday in the Journal of the American Medical Association. ... Losing a parent or sibling early in life can often be traumatic, causing mental health or cognitive issues, higher risks of heart disease

and earlier mortality, researchers noted, adding repeated losses can increase the likelihood of heart disease, dementia or mortality. ... "Future research should focus on finding ways to reduce disproportionate losses among vulnerable groups. For those who experience loss, providing resources for coping and addressing the trauma is essential."

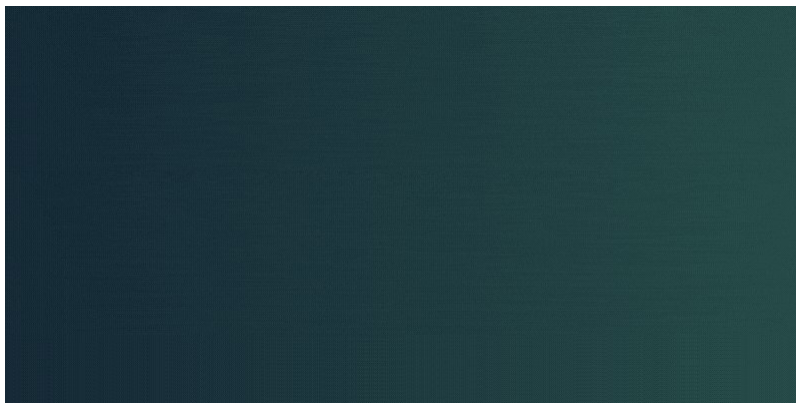
Editor's Note: [Click here for the study, "Familial Loss of a Loved One and Biological Again: NIMHD Social Epigenomics Program."](#) Calling all executive leaders who decide staffing and resources for your hospice's bereavement services: examine the long-term mission of your bereavement services for (1) children and teens, (2) young adults, (3) persons with racial and ethnic disparities.

Proactive fall prevention: Elevating patient safety and healthcare excellence

HealthCare Business News; by Amy Hester; 7/26/24

... The significance of fall prevention cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts patient outcomes and overall healthcare quality. With the patient safety solutions market growing at an expected rate of 11.2%, the importance of proactive fall prevention strategies becomes even more evident. ... In the United States, preventable medical errors, including falls, are the third leading cause of death. The impact of falls on patient health and recovery is profound, often leading to longer hospital stays, delayed recovery and increased risk of subsequent falls.

Editor's Note: Proactive fall prevention is especially important for persons needing palliative or hospice care. As the person's health and mobility declines, they have to adjust to these changes mentally, emotionally, physically, and relationally. Recognizing decline can feel like defeat. Asking for help can be tough. Family members can expect the person to move more independently more than possible, leading to falls.



A blood test accurately diagnosed Alzheimer's 90% of the time, study finds

The New York Times; by Pam Belluck; 7/28/24

The New York Times says researchers “reported that a blood test was significantly more accurate than doctors’ interpretation of cognitive tests and CT scans in signaling” Alzheimer’s disease. The study “found that about 90% of the time the blood test correctly identified whether patients with memory problems had Alzheimer’s,” while “dementia specialists using standard methods that did not include expensive PET scans or invasive spinal taps were accurate 73% of the time” and “primary care doctors using those methods got it right only 61% of the time.” The findings were published in JAMA and presented at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference.

Regulatory News

HHS unveils major revamp to shift health data, AI strategy and policy under ONC

Fierce Healthcare; by Emma Beavins; 7/25/24

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has been renamed and restructured, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced [July 25]. The restructuring will affect technology, cybersecurity, data and artificial intelligence strategy and policy functions. The agency will be renamed the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy and Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ASTP/ONC). Head of ONC, Micky Tripathi, will hold the new title of assistant secretary for technology policy in addition to his title of national coordinator for health IT. ... Under ASTP, there will be an Office of Policy, an Office of Technology, an Office of Standards, Certification and Analysis and an Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

Post-Acute Care News

Optum closing clinics, laying off 500+

Becker's Health IT; by Jakob Emerson; 7/25/24

Optum is closing clinics in multiple states and laying off 524 employees across California. According to regulatory documents filed July 18, the UnitedHealth

Group company will terminate the California employees from Sept. 16 through January 2025 at clinic and administrative office locations in Hayward, Glendora, Montbello, Covina, Pasadena, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Irvine, Beaumont, Redlands, Highland, El Segundo, and Cerritos. The layoffs include some remote employees in other states. At Optum California's corporate office in El Segundo, 64 individuals will be laid off. Another 157 employees will be laid off at an office in Cerritos.



Military veterans honored during special ceremony at Sarasota adult day center

Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Sarasota, FL; by Noelle Fox; 7/29/24

Twenty military veterans were honored recently at a special pinning event and remembrance ceremony at Town Square Sarasota jointly hosted by the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and Empath Tidewell Hospice. The veterans honored were all members of Town Square Sarasota, an adult day center, and some of the members honored had fought in the Korean and Vietnam wars. The event was part of the Tidewell Honors Veterans Program. ... Since opening in early 2022, Town Square Sarasota has partnered with Empath Tidewell Hospital to host four special pinning ceremonies honoring its veteran members. Town

Square Sarasota also has integrated aspects into its location and programming to recognize and welcome veterans.

Technology / Innovations News

Following the CrowdStrike outage, healthcare stresses the importance of prevention

HealthCare Brew; by Cassie McGrath; 7/25/24

... [The recent CrowdStrike outage] affected millions across all sorts of industries, from healthcare to travel. ... However, amid the chaos, what has largely gone untold are stories of the companies that emerged unscathed. And within those unaffected companies lies a lesson for others, according to Andrew Molosky, president and CEO of Tampa-based Chapters Health System. ... "We've really focused on business continuity, redundancies, safety nets, and understanding of the difference between cybersecurity as a task and cybersecurity as a cultural commitment of your organization," Molosky said. ... These investments, Molosky said, included protocols for documenting on paper, using a backup application that provides patient information when electronic medical records and other systems are offline, and allowances for bringing in personal devices to use if company devices go down.

General News

Another healthcare, pharmacy chain files Chapter 11 bankruptcy

Idaho Statesman; by Daniel Kline; updated 7/30/24

... Rite Aid has been in Chapter 11 bankruptcy since October and has closed nearly 700 locations. CVS (CVS) and Walgreens (WBA) have managed to stay solvent, but both companies have been closing stores as well. That's partially something that can be blamed on Covid. The pandemic caused a population shift and that left thousands of pharmacies in locations that lack audience. If you used to pick up your prescription, and maybe a snack, at a pharmacy during your lunch break and you now no longer go into the office most days, that makes it hard for those locations to thrive. Now, another pharmacy chain that also operates an array of services for older Americans is facing financial distress.



Today's Encouragement

I'd rather regret the risks that didn't work out than the chances I didn't take at all. ~ Simone Biles, Olympic medalist, gymnastics, 2016, 2021, 2024



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