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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

August 14th, 2024

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Headlines

Free CHAP Webinar: CMS Posts Final Hospice Rule - Quality changes and regulatory requirement

Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP); taught by Dr. Jennifer Kennedy; posted 8/13/24, webinar will be 8/21/24, 1:00-2:00 pm EDT

CMS posted the final rule for hospice providers which drives big changes into motion for 2025. [\[Click here for the\] Final FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update/Quality Reporting Rule \(CMS-1810-F\)](#), posted on the Federal Register on August 7, 2024. This free webinar will be taught by Jennifer Kennedy, Vice President, Quality, Compliance and Standards, CHAP. She spent many years as a leader and nurse in diverse healthcare settings with the past 25 years in hospice and palliative care. Dr. Kennedy came to CHAP in 2021 with a vision of moving the organization's quality forward as "the" accreditation partner of choice for the majority of community-based providers. She believes no matter

what type of care a patient receives or how many times they receive care, every experience should be of the highest quality. Webinar Objectives:

1. Describe regulatory and quality changes in the FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index Final rule
2. Explain the regulatory requirements providers will need to take for compliance.

Editor's Note: [Community Health Accreditation Partner \(CHAP\)](#) is a sponsor for our newsletter.

Hospice Provider News

Heart disease, cancer remain leading causes of death in US

Becker's Hospital Review; by Elizabeth Gregerson; 8/9/24

Heart disease and cancer remained the leading causes of death in 2023, according to provisional data released Aug. 8 by the CDC. Mortality data is collected by the National Center for Health Statistics National Vital Statistics System from U.S. death certificates, according to an analysis published Aug. 8 in *JAMA*. After a sharp increase in the rate of deaths from heart disease during the pandemic, the 2023 rate (162.1) reportedly was closer to pre-pandemic levels (161.5). The rate of deaths from cancer decreased from 146.2 in 2019 to 141.8 in 2023. Cause of death data is based on the underlying cause of events leading to death. Death rate is recorded as the age adjusted death rate per 100,000 deaths, authors of the *JAMA* analysis said.

Editor's Note: For a more data-oriented article that identifies additional causes of death, [click here for JAMA Network's "Leading Causes of Death in the US, 2019-2023."](#)

Center for Hospice Care Heartwize Program brings an individualized approach to cardiac care

Great News Life; by Lauren Grasham; 8/12/24

To help patients live peacefully and at ease during one of life's most vulnerable moments, Center for Hospice Care (CHC) welcomes all with open arms to its [HeartWize program](#). Through the program, the CHC staff develops individualized plans with each patient and their loved ones to help them manage heart failure and other heart diseases, allowing patients to receive quality care in the comfort of their own homes without the worry of a hospital visit. "When

their symptoms are not managed promptly, it gets to the point that patients can't breathe. When a patient can't breathe, the very first thing they're going to want to do is go to the hospital," said Director of Nursing Chrissy Madlem. "It's important that we teach them the techniques to manage these end-of-life care symptoms that they're dealing with so they can stay home and be comfortable with their families."

Editor's Note: The Center for Hospice Care is in Mishawaka, IN.

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Letter: Closing Cottage of the Meadow [Hospice House] is a loss for all

Yakima Herald-Republic, Yakima, WA; by Lee Murdock; 8/13/24, with news post from 8/5/24

[Letter] To the editor — I was devastated to learn that Cottage in the Meadow, our local hospice facility, is ending hospice care. Both of my parents were fortunate enough to spend their final days in this serene and caring environment. The difference between the overrun hospital setting with its short staffing and the compassionate, individualized care at Cottage in the Meadow was stark. This facility provided invaluable support not only to those at the end of life but also to their families. As our population ages, the need for such services will only increase. Studies have shown that hospice care can reduce healthcare costs by up to 30% compared to traditional hospital care (Journal of Palliative Medicine). Additionally, hospice care significantly reduces hospital readmissions and emergency room visits, further reducing healthcare costs (JAMA). In a healthcare system with ample profit margins, ensuring access to hospice care is the least we can do. ...

Editor's Note: This letter to the editor was in response to Yakima Herald-Republic's 8/5/24 article, "Yakima's Cottage in the Meadow will close its hospice house. It will reopen as a skilled nursing facility." For another Letter to the Editor, from Laurie Jackson, CEO, Tri-Cities CHaplaincy Hospice & Palliative Care, [click here](#).

Clinical News

Covid is now categorized as endemic disease, US health officials say

KFF Health News; 8/12/24

The revised classification means covid is here to stay, but we can manage it better because it is now predictable. The change in stance does not affect any guidance on how to deal with the disease and comes as reports show most areas of the U.S. are seeing consistent rises in covid infections. ...

- NPR: Is COVID Endemic Yet? Yep, Says the CDC. Here's What That Means ...
- CIDRAP: US COVID Activity Continues To Pick Up ...
- Los Angeles Times: This Is California's Strongest Summer COVID Wave In Years. Why It Got So Bad ...

ETC model is failing to boost home dialysis utilization, nephrologists say

McKnights Home Care; by Adam Healy; 8/9/24

Nephrologists are worried that the End-Stage Renal Disease Treatment Choices (ETC) model has not made good on its promise to promote home-based kidney care and advance health equity. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services launched the ETC model in 2021, randomly selecting about 30% of providers treating end-stage renal disease for participation. The model uses financial incentives to encourage greater use of home dialysis treatment and increase kidney transplant access. However, these incentives have not been effective in producing their intended results, according to Amit Kapoor, MD, the chief nephrologist at Strive Health. ... A March [study](#) published in *JAMA* found that the ETC model may unintentionally punish providers who serve high-needs, low-income or minority patients.



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Optimi Health and Psyence Biomedical sign non-binding letter of intent to advance global psilocybin drug development

Psyence Biomedical Ltd; by Andrea Mestrovic; 8/13/24

Optimi Health Corp. ..., a GMP-approved, Health Canada licensed psychedelics pharmaceutical manufacturer specializing in botanical psilocybin and MDMA, and Psyence Biomedical Ltd., ... a developer of nature-derived psilocybin-based therapeutics, are pleased to announce that the companies have entered into a non-binding Letter of Intent (“LOI”). This arrangement would position Optimi as the exclusive supplier of GMP nature-derived (non-synthetic) psilocybin extract for Psyence’s global drug development and commercialization initiatives for FDA-approved use in the Palliative Care context.

Mergers & Acquisition News

LTM Group expands into Texas with latest home health acquisition

Home Health Care News; by Audrie Martin; 8/12/24

The LTM Group announced the acquisition of Wichita Home Health Services Monday. The deal will add over 500 team members and more than 1,000 patients to the company’s network. The company provides – through multiple locations – home health, personal care, hospice and rehabilitation services. The organization collaborates with health care systems and payers to deliver care to patients in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Texas. ... [The] company will continue operating under the Wichita Home Health Services brand, and all local leadership will remain the same. The acquisition agreement was finalized last week, and the transaction is set to be completed in the next quarter.

Notable Mentions:

- *Founder, Dr. Ruth Constant, "who developed the first home health agency certified under Medicare in 1966. She was also one of the founding fellows of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) and the Texas Association of Home Care and Hospice (TAHC)."*
- *Chrystal Everett, President of TAHC*
- *LTM Group CEO David Kerns*

Post-Acute Care News

CDC releases new profile of assisted living residents

McKnights Long-Term Care News; by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 8/10/24

Residents living in assisted living and other residential care communities in 2022 mostly were female (67%), white (92%) and 85 or older (53%), according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. The CDC said that data from the National Post-acute and Long-term Care Study outlined in the profile of residential care community residents in 2022 would help inform policymakers, providers, researchers and consumer advocates planning to help meet the needs of a rapidly growing older adult population.



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Technology / Innovations News

Which parts of healthcare are off limits to AI?

Becker's Health IT; by Giles Bruce; 8/9/24

The AI physician will not see you now — or ever, for that matter. As artificial intelligence proliferates in healthcare, health system leaders told *Becker's* that human providers will always be part of the medical field, with their — AI-aided — treatment recommendations being discussed with patients and family members. "Any patient care decisions ... should be made by patients and their caregivers or family members, obviously in consultation with their physician or provider," said Joe Depa, chief data and **AI officer** of Atlanta-based Emory

Healthcare. ... Robots — or AI — will simply never take the place of that human touch, health system leaders say.

General News

Giving feedback can be daunting for new leaders — here's how to provide it thoughtfully

The Conversation; by Tracy Walsh; 8/11/24

Giving performance feedback at work can be a stressful experience, especially for new leaders and their employees. It often evokes feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and defensiveness. ... Yet, feedback has never been more important. ... When feedback is delivered thoughtfully and perceived as constructive by employees, it can bridge the gap between potential and performance and provide clarity in times of uncertainty. ... [It] includes recognizing achievements, fostering professional development and building trust with employees. ... It's equally important for leaders to seek and receive feedback from their employees. Embracing feedback enhances adaptability by providing leaders with real-time insights into what's working and what's not, allowing them to make necessary adjustments. [Click on the title's link for descriptions and guides.]

Healthcare added 1 million workers since 2020: 5 things to know

Becker's Hospital Review; by Molly Gamble; 8/12/24

Healthcare faces numerous workforce challenges, but the industry has steadily added jobs after the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted staffing. An Altarum [analysis](#) of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data finds a dual reality for healthcare: The industry has added more than 1 million workers since March 2020 and, at the same time, thousands more healthcare jobs remain unfilled as demand for workers continues to far exceed the supply. Here are five takeaways from Altarum's jobs analysis, which includes breakdowns of the sectors that led employment recovery:

1. Healthcare employment's rebound. ...
2. Hospital and ambulatory care job growth. ...
3. Persistent workforce shortages. ...
4. Pandemic-driven employment shifts. ...
5. Challenges in nursing and residential care. ...

Age bias declines in the workplace, but work remains

McKnights Senior Living; by Lois A. Bowers; 8/12/24

Some good news, according to the results of a recent survey by the Age-Friendly Institute, is that it appears that fewer Americans aged 50 or more years believe that “age bias is a fact of life in the workplace” compared with 15 years ago, according to the institute. The organization has been conducting research involving a nationally representative sample of this age group for more than a decade, and the percentage of people answering yes about the existence of age bias at work has decreased over time, going from 96% in 2009 to 83% in 2019 to 65% in 2024. ... But the decrease doesn’t mean there isn’t work to do. “In a society that is increasingly focused on equality and inclusivity, ageism lurks in the shadows,” the institute notes.

International News

First Swiss hospice for terminally and critically ill children closes a gap in care

NZZ; by Erich Aschwanden, Reidbach near Bern, Switzerland; 8/12/24

As many as 10,000 children and young people in Switzerland live with life-shortening illnesses. Because the state does not help support efforts to care for them in special facilities, private organizations are stepping in. ... Switzerland's first children's hospice is located in a converted farmhouse in Riedbach, a small hamlet on the outskirts of Bern. As idyllic as these surroundings may be, the fate of the children and their families who are taken in by the Allani Foundation is bitter. These are children and young people with life-shortening illnesses such as cancer, genetic defects or neurological diagnoses.

Today's Encouragement

Endings matter, not just for the person but, perhaps even more, for the ones left behind. ~ Atul Gawande, in *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*



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