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From: Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter
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Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 4:00 AM
To: Cordt Kassner
Subject: Your Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter for 09/05/24

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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

September 5th, 2024

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Hospice Provider News

Sharp HospiceCare's 21st annual benefit regatta raises nearly \$700,000 to support new hospice home in Poway

The Coronado Times, Coronado, CO; by Dani Schwartz; 9/3/24

Sharp HospiceCare's 21st Annual Benefit Dinner and Regatta brought the San Diego community together in a remarkable display of generosity last weekend, raising a record-breaking total of nearly \$700,000 to support the construction of a new hospice home in Poway. ... The funds raised will significantly contribute to the completion of Moore MountainView Hospice Home in Poway, a facility that will provide a comforting, home-like environment for patients with life-limiting illnesses. This new residence is scheduled to open in Spring 2025 and will join Sharp's existing hospice homes in La Mesa, Del Cerro and Bonita.

Hospice executives: Value-based care, regulation will shape hospices' future

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 9/3/24

Disruptive reimbursement and regulatory challenges are top of mind for today's hospice c-suite executives, who recently sat down with Hospice News to discuss what they see as the largest hurdles to sustainable end-of-life care delivery. Reimbursement pressures and changes among the most significant concerns for today's hospices, according to Kristen Yntema, president and CEO of AuthoraCare Collective. The North Carolina-based nonprofit provides hospice and palliative care, among other services.

Hospice of Hope names new executive director

The Highland County Press, Hillsboro, OH; by Hospice of Hope Press Release; 9/3/24

Hospice of Hope has recently announced the appointment of Derek (Shawn) Flaughner as the organization's new Executive Director. Flaughner will succeed Anthony (Tony) Trovato, who is set to retire at the end of September 2024. Flaughner obtained his Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Morehead State University and pursued a master's degree in accounting at Clemson University. A retired Army National Guard Veteran with a combat tour in Afghanistan, Flaughner has dedicated 31 years to Hospice of Hope, progressing through roles including Staff Accountant, Controller and Director of Business Operations. Outgoing Executive Director Tony Trovato expressed his confidence in Flaughner, stating, "I am pleased to pass on the leadership to someone as committed and accomplished as Shawn. His wealth of experience and deep understanding of the healthcare landscape will be invaluable in his new capacity."

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OhioHealth and Compassus finalize partnership for home health and hospice

PR Newswire, Columbus, OH and Brentwood, TN; by Compassus / OhioHealth; 9/4/24
Compassus, a leading national provider of integrated home-based care services, and OhioHealth, a nationally recognized, not-for-profit, charitable healthcare outreach of the United Methodist Church, are pleased to announce the finalization of their partnership for home health and hospice services to be called OhioHealth at Home in partnership with Compassus. Under this partnership, Compassus has acquired ownership interest in three hospice locations and four home health locations that were formerly led by OhioHealth. Compassus will manage the operations of these agencies, leveraging its extensive experience in home-based care, while OhioHealth will continue to play a key role in delivering high-quality care in Ohio. OhioHealth's Athens hospice services and the Kobacker House in Columbus, Ohio, are excluded from the partnership.

Editor's note: This finalizes the announcement we posted on 6/12/24: [Compassus announces new partnership for home care and hospice](#).

Hospice 'pausing' Martin-Linsin Residence while expanding home-care model

OrleansHub.com, Orleans County, NY; by Tom Rivers; 9/3/24

The Martin-Linsin Residence has temporarily closed or is on "pause" following a thorough analysis that showed "significant financial losses due to the increasing operational costs" at the residence, according to a statement this evening from

Niagara Hospice, which is running Hospice of Orleans. The eight-unit residence opened in 2012 following a \$2.3 million capital campaign. Martin-Linsin used to have a waiting list, but was down to one resident last week. No new residents had been admitted for about three weeks. The clinical staff also was laid off last week after the death of the remaining resident at Martin-Linsin, a Hospice employee said. Niagara Hospice, in its statement, said it is dedicated to caring for the local community, and hospice care “continues to be delivered throughout Orleans County without interruption.”

Estela's blog: A mother's scent

KTSM.com, El Paso, TX; by Esther Casas; 9/3/24

My mom passed away on September 28, 2002. This year will mark 22 years since we had our last conversations. I remember that day like it was yesterday. ... I remember her eyes, but I barely remember her voice. We had captured many memorable moments in pictures but never recorded her voice or asked her questions that would never be answered. If you have elderly parents, I suggest you have a real and frank conversation and record it. As I spent several hours doing some fall cleaning, I found myself immersed in memories. ... Each item I discarded felt like a small step towards closure. ... I found a zip-lock bag with the house dress my mom was wearing the morning she died. ... A hospice nurse had written her name: Esther Casas. I carefully opened the plastic and took a deep breath. Most of her scent is now gone. I quickly closed the bag to preserve what little scent is left and put it back in the drawer. ... I felt melancholy, but I used it as an opportunity to remember the three weeks she was in hospice care and the incredible team of family, friends, and hospice nurses who helped her transition home.

Editor's note: Have you experienced the hospice care and death of a family member? Whom would you like to thank? Now is a great time. Let them know how that experience of good care plays into the daily care you provide now.



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Aroostook House of Comfort hosts Remembrance Way Memorial Garden & Pathway dedication

The County, Presque Isel, ME; 9/2/24

On Saturday, August 24 the Aroostook Hospice Foundation hosted its annual Remembrance Way Memorial Garden & Pathway Dedication Ceremony at the Aroostook House of Comfort Gazebo, a touching event that brought together families and friends to honor the memory of their loved ones. This year's ceremony featured the dedication of 38 new stones, a bench, wind sculptures and one mini garden, each carefully personalized to celebrate the lives they represent. ... The Remembrance Way is more than just a garden — it's a meaningful tribute and a vital part of the Aroostook House of Comfort's mission.

Palliative Care Provider News

Respiratory patients less likely to get palliative care

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 9/3/24

Patients with some respiratory conditions often do not receive outpatient palliative care and have relatively higher rates of intensive care admissions than those with other illnesses. This includes patients with lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and a condition called idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), according to a recent study published in the pulmonology journal CHEST. These patients tend to have high symptom burden, diminished quality of life and aggressive health care utilization at the end of life, the study found.

Clinical News

Interventions provided by palliative care social workers: Provide interventions that lessen suffering in patients living with serious illness

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Center email; by Melissa C Palmer; 9/3/24

... Reflecting on my own years of experience as a palliative care social worker, the work we do is not as clear-cut as being able to prescribe medication for a symptom or titrate pain medication. The art of the intervention for social work takes time, patience, and congruent presence. To the layperson, it may appear that our interventions are just to talk with people. But that is just a small piece of the beauty and grace that evolves from our work.



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“Rehabbed to Death” in oncology: Where do we go from here?

JCO Oncology Practice; by Daniel E. Lage, Craig D. Blinderman, Corita R. Grudzen; 9/3/24

You can go to rehab to see if you get stronger for chemo. These are words that every clinician caring for hospitalized patients with cancer has heard or said countless times. And yet, especially when it comes to older adults with advanced solid tumors, less than a third of these patients will ever receive systemic therapy again. Furthermore, their symptom profile is more similar to those discharged to hospice than to those discharged home, and they face debilitating functional decline and early mortality—leading some to coin the term “rehabbed to death” to describe this phenomenon. We suggest a few key areas of focus: (1) reframing hospital discharge conversations, including incorporating practices of disclosing prognoses using validated tools or other algorithms; (2) empowering team-based care and inclusion of palliative care clinicians in the SNF setting; and (3) identifying patients failing to make functional progress early. [Also see accompanying article: **Respect for the patient-oncologist relationship may limit serious illness communication by acute and postacute care clinicians after discharge to a skilled nursing facility** by Sarguni Singh, Ashley Dafoe, John Cagle, Elizabeth R. Kessler, Hillary D. Lum, Brooke Dorsey Holliman, Stacy Fischer.]

Beers Criteria update for medication use in older adults

Medscape Nurses; by Linda Girgis; 8/30/24

Primary care physicians know the complexities of treating older patients, from increased complications from medications and procedures to comorbidities stemming from having multiple medical conditions. The Beers Criteria were established by the American Geriatrics Society as a guide for physicians about medications that may possess more risks than benefits in older patients, specifically those aged 65 years and older. There are approximately 100 medications on the list. Criteria used to establish the list include medications to avoid over the age of 65 in an outpatient setting, medications to avoid in certain medical conditions, medications to avoid that may interact with other medications, medications to avoid with renal impairment, and medications to avoid where harmful side effects outweigh the possible benefits. The American Geriatrics Society updates the list as new published evidence becomes available.

Mergers & Acquisition News

Private equity ownership of US hospice centers boomed in recent years – study

The Guardian; by Jessica Glenza; 9/3/24

Investors spent about \$1tn buying healthcare facilities over last decade, leading to reports of worsening patient care. Private equity investors are increasingly buying up hospice centers – healthcare facilities meant to focus on pain relief and emotional support for people near the end of their lives. The new study was published in the journal Health Affairs [**Private equity acquisitions of hospices are increasing; Ownership remains opaque**, by Melissa D. Aldridge, Lauren J. Hunt, Zelle Halloran, and Krista L. Harrison] and provides more evidence of how private equity have acquired firms using often sophisticated and opaque ownership structures. Although for-profit ownership is not new in US healthcare, the surge of private equity ownership is. Such investment groups have spent an estimated \$1tn over the last decade, buying up hospitals and doctors' offices.



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Post-Acute Care News

Bargaining, contract fights heat up across health systems

Modern Healthcare; by Mari Devereaux; 9/3/24

Thousands of healthcare workers nationwide are negotiating for new contracts, and staff at some facilities are preparing for the possibility of strikes in the coming months. Nurses at HCA Healthcare's MountainView Hospital in Las Vegas voted last week to authorize a strike if no progress is made in negotiating for a contract that ensures higher pay, meal breaks for nurses and better retention strategies. National Nurses United members at the health system's Mission Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina, are conducting a strike authorization vote. These moves, combined with dozens of pickets, protests and contract fights across the country, exemplify the ongoing tension between healthcare employers and staff.

Discussion includes: HCA Healthcare, Albany Medical Center, Sharp HealthCare, Kaiser Permanente, Keck Medicine of USC, and University of Michigan Health-Sparrow.

General News

After successful IT career, Denise DeLeo finds new meaning in teen hobby

LNP / LancasterOnline, Lancaster, PA; by Karyl Carmingnani; 9/4/24

For 50 years, the Lancaster New Era ... highlighted the accomplishments and aspirations of local high school students in a weekly feature known as Teen of the Week. This is one of a series of stories in which we catch up with some of those students highlighted 50 years ago, in 1974, to see how their lives met their teenage goals and what they would tell today's high school students. When Denise Weitzel was featured as a Teen of the Week in 1974, the bright-eyed 18-year-old had spent three months as an exchange student in a speck of a town in Denmark, was an avid seamstress, ... [Denise] DeLeo got her first sewing machine when she was 12, and made a lot of her clothes growing up. ... DeLeo had an illustrious career in IT, becoming vice president for an information company. But tragedy struck when a disgruntled employee at one of her company's clients returned to the workplace and gunned down nine people, including her boss. DeLeo decided to leave the industry and help raise her granddaughter instead. And get back to what she loves: sewing. DeLeo also makes memory bears for hospice families. She uses clothing from the deceased person to make personalized keepsakes for family members.

A wave of change is coming for healthcare benefits — are hospitals ready?

Becker's Hospital CFO Report; by Jakob Emerson; 9/3/24

Surveys of employers are making one thing clear: Healthcare costs are rising faster than they did before the pandemic, and those costs are being driven by inflation, the increasing use of weight loss medications, and higher overall medical expenses. ... As financial pressures mount, many employers are exploring or expanding alternative payment and coverage models, a trend that could significantly alter hospital's revenue streams. ... The average cost of employer-sponsored coverage is expected to jump 9 % from 2024 to 2025, according to estimates from Aon published in August. Healthcare costs per employee are projected to surpass \$16,000 per employee in 2025, driven by rising employment levels, inflation and rising pharmaceutical costs. In 2024, employers budgeted an average of \$14,823 per employee for healthcare costs. These costs have risen by more than 20% over the past five years and by 43% over the past decade.



Education

Employer educational assistance programs can help long-term care workers pay off student loans

McKnight's Senior Living; by John Roszkowski; 9/3/24

Employer-based educational programs still can be used to help pay off worker students' loans through the end of next year, potentially enabling long-term care employers to provide relief to their workers who are struggling to pay off such debt. The IRS issued a reminder last week that employers who offer educational assistance programs also can use them to help pay for their employees' student loan obligations through Dec. 31, 2025. Although educational assistance programs have been available to employees for many years to help them pay for

tuition, books, supplies and other educational expenses, the option to use them to help workers pay off student loans has only been available for payments made after March 27, 2000, according to the IRS. The student loan provision will expire at the end of 2025. The student loan payment initiative may be one way for senior living, nursing home, home care and hospice employers to attract and retain employees, many of whom may be trying to pay off student loans.

Publisher's note: Some hospices offer employer-based educational programs - does yours?

Today's Encouragement

Nothing is impossible; the word itself says, "I'm Possible." ~ Audrey Hepburn



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