FEATURE ARTICLE

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“I have attended many conferences in the last 30 years, and by far, FMC has never failed my expectations. The conferences are engaging, the networking is amazing, and the support is like no other. Bill Dombi and his staff always knock it out of the park.”

-- Joseph Ramon III, CEO/Administrator, Health Care Unlimited, Inc.

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At the 2022 Financial Management Conference (FMC), we’ll cover in-depth discussions on financial health and related topics that contribute to your bottom line. Over 2+ days, home care and hospice decision-makers will gather in Las Vegas for the only destination designed for financial management pros to master getting things done.

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TOP STORIES

NAHC to Congress: Time for a Big Permanent Investment in HCBS

NAHC and a group of likeminded organizations have written to leaders of Congress, urging them to make a large permanent investment in home and community-based services (HCBS). The American Rescue Plan Act funding allowed states to provide
hazard pay to the direct care workforce and maintain access to vital HCBS that have enabled people with disabilities and older adults to remain living safely in their own homes during the pandemic.

However, those rescue funds are temporary and have stopped accruing. Without a large permanent investment in HCBS, the direct care workforce crisis will worsen and HCBS access will decrease. Timely investment is needed to provide greater sustainability for states, individuals who rely on HCBS, their family caregivers, and the paid workforce providing these critical services.

Surgeon General Advisory Sounds Alarm on Health Worker Burnout and Resignation

United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a new Surgeon General’s Advisory highlighting the urgent need to address the health worker burnout crisis across the country. Health workers, including physicians, nurses, community and public health workers, nurse aides, among others, have long faced systemic challenges in the health care system even before the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to crisis levels of burnout.

The pandemic further exacerbated burnout for health workers, with many risking and sacrificing their own lives in the service of others while responding to a public health crisis.

The Surgeon General’s Advisory Addressing Health Worker Burnout lays out recommendations for health care organizations, health insurers, health technology companies, policymakers, academic institutions, researchers, and communities to address health worker burnout and ensure their well-being – so that health workers can thrive and better answer their call as healers.

Topline recommendations to address burnout in the Surgeon General’s Advisory include:

Home-Based Care Stakeholders Echo US Surgeon General’s Health Care Workforce Shortage Concerns

Home-based care stakeholders agree with the U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy that burnout among the nation’s health care staff could lead to an even more severe worker shortage.

The ongoing staffing crisis in home-based care and other health care sectors was the topic of discussion this week as Vice President Kamala Harris visited
Murthy issued a report that projected a shortage of 3 million “essential low-wage health workers” in the next five years and nearly 140,000 doctors by 2033, according to the Associated Press.

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### Medicaid Regains Power to Deduct From Home Health Workers’ Pay

State Medicaid programs will regain the authority they lost in the Trump era to withhold union dues and deductions for benefits from home health workers’ payments.

The Biden administration final rule (RIN 0938–AU73), published Thursday, is the latest move in a back-and-forth disagreement between Democratic and Republican administrations over how Medicaid programs should interact with home health workers and their unions.

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### A ‘Persistence of Patient Harm’: Hospital Failures Highlight Need for Home-Based Care Investments

The traditional brick-and-mortar hospital system is broken, often leaving patients in a condition that’s worse than when they first arrived.

That’s according to a May report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG). The findings throw further support for facility-based care alternatives, including the types of hospital-at-home models that lean heavily on home health and home care agencies.

“Given the scale and persistence of patient harm in hospitals in the decade since our last report, HHS leadership and agencies must work with urgency to reduce patient harm in hospitals,” stated the report.
Home-Based Care Leaders Discuss Staffing-Woe Mitigation, ‘Ghosting’ in Recruiting

Though staffing remains the top challenge for the home-based care industry, providers agree that there isn’t one universal panacea. Instead, there are various approaches that have yielded results for different agencies across the country.

One of these approaches is making sure that potential clinicians and caregivers know about the job opportunities that exist within home-based care, Mandy Tilton, chief nursing officer at Bayada Home Health Care, said during a panel discussion at Home Health Care News’ Staffing Summit Tuesday.

If you work in home health as a care provider, Relias needs to hear from you!

Relias is seeking the experiences and perspectives of home and hospice health aides, personal care aides and CNAs, VN/LPNs, and RNs age 18 and older located in the US who care for home health patients. They’re looking for answers to questions like: How did your education prepare you for practice? How have your responsibilities changed since the COVID-19 pandemic? What might impact your desire to leave your job?

This survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete, and your input will help Relias understand the needs and values of dedicated people just like you, working within this frequently overlooked and undervalued part of the healthcare system.

Proposed federal law would give older Ohioans more choices for health care: Joseph Russell

While home-based care is an option for some Ohio seniors, them all, especially older persons who have limited support at home. This underscores the need to enhance home-based care services for this unique patient population.

To address this gap, help modernize America’s post-acute-care system, and create more options for seniors, a
bipartisan group of lawmakers in Congress has introduced a bill to expand home-based health care for seniors as an alternative to skilled nursing facilities, if clinically appropriate for the patient. If signed into law, the Choose Home Care Act (S. 2562/H.R. 5514), will give more Medicare patients the option to receive expanded home health services following hospitalization. Choose Home will also allow eligible Medicare beneficiaries to receive extended patient-care services such as skilled nursing care, personal hands-on care, physical therapy, medical social services, and medical supplies.

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Home-Based Care Providers Are Raising Expectations for Their Technology Partners

Home-based care providers looking to grow, or even just to survive, are increasingly turning to technology to do so.

A major part of that is EHRs. And currently, providers are generally unsatisfied with their EHR vendor relationships, according to a new survey conducted by MatrixCare and Home Health Care News.

Providers, more than anything, want more customer support, ongoing education and training from their EHR vendors.

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Former Home Health Leaders Turning Their Attention to Non-Medical Home Care

In order for AccordCare to reach its goals of becoming a nationally recognized provider, the Marietta, Georgia-based company is dedicated to offering a diversified set of services to its clients.

Brandon Ballew, the CEO of AccordCare, is a former Kindred at Home executive. But as the home health industry changed, he saw increased opportunity on the non-medical home care side.

Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, Ballew hopes the private-duty home care provider grows more organically than it has in the previous two years. Hiring new caregivers will be a key component of that.

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CVS Health moves further into the home with virtual primary care offering

CVS Health has launched Virtual Primary Care, adding to its array of home care-related offerings and signaling it may be moving closer to a home care acquisition.

Last week, the Woonsocket, RI-based company announced it will begin offering virtual primary care services on Jan. 1, 2023, to members of its wholly owned Aetna insurance plans, self-insured plan sponsors and CVS Caremark clients.

“We’re meeting people where they are on their health care journey and providing care that is more convenient and easier to access.” Creagh Milford, CVS vice president of enterprise virtual care, said in a statement. “When we make it simple, we can help people lead healthier lives.”

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EHR Giant PointClickCare Wants to Dominate Home Care

PointClickCare, a major electronic health record (EHR) provider for skilled nursing and senior living providers, is making a push to gain significant market share with a home care EHR platform.

The Mississauga, Ontario-based company hired Mark Tomzak last month to head up the home care division as executive vice president and general manager. Previously, Tomzak was CEO of SmartLinx and then Careworx, a large provider of managed point-of-care, eMAR, mobile computing and wireless solutions to the senior care industry. Careworx is also a partner of PointClickCare—but Tomzak’s familiarity with PointClickCare goes back further.

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Alliance Homecare Names Nancy Gillette Chief Executive Officer

Alliance Homecare, a leader in fully licensed Home Care services in the New York metropolitan area, has announced Nancy Gillette as Alliance’s new CEO.
Founder Gregory Solometo Continues as Chairman of the Board of Directors

Alliance Homecare today announced that Nancy Gillette has been promoted to CEO and Chief Caregiver, effective June 1, 2022. Gregory Solometo, founder and current chairman and CEO, will continue to serve as Chairman of the Board, focusing on the company's strategic initiatives.

“Since joining Alliance Homecare as President and Chief Operating Officer earlier this year, Nancy has quickly proven her ability to lead, innovate and operate in the groundbreaking Alliance way,” said Mr. Solometo. “Nancy’s time and professional experience with The Walt Disney Company and in various homecare organizations has uniquely positioned her to drive Alliance Homecare forward. Her talent and vision will shepherd us into the future of luxury homecare that honors and respects The Grandma Rule—to treat everyone the way you would want your grandmother to be treated.”

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HHS takes on climate change, and home care and hospice leaders cheer

Leaders in the home care and hospice industry are hailing the Department of Health and Human Services’ new Office of Environmental Justice. Louisiana Home Care Association CEO Warren Hebert told McKnight’s Home Care Daily Pulse the effort to protect vulnerable communities against climate change is “a very prudent move,” as hurricane season approaches and destruction from last year’s Hurricane Ida is fresh in Hebert’s mind.

“All of this is extremely important work because we know that environmental factors play into the communities that are at low levels of elevation along coastal regions,” Hebert said. “They are by far the most susceptible when we are talking about tropical weather.”

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It’s basic: Take care of people and they’ll have better health outcomes

In the world of clinical research, it seems like there are a lot of what I’ll call “no duh” health findings. We all know about these, but I’ll give you a few examples, based on some recent McKnight’s Clinical Daily headlines (great pub, by the way):
Headline: More exercise, healthy eating can prevent type 2 diabetes in older adults, study finds

Snarky comment: Stop the presses! Obesity is linked to type 2 diabetes!

Headline: Socioeconomic disadvantage raises risk of sarcopenia, data study finds

Snarky comment: You mean if you don’t have good nutrition, you’ll have muscle loss? Mind-blowing.

And my favorite of late ...

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RESOURCES

The Human Experience 2020: Vision for the Future of Health Care - The Beryl Institute

PDHCA Education - PDHCA Website

Littler Operational Guidelines for the Home Care Industry Amid COVID 19?
- Littler Mendelson, P.C.

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Generations Homecare System is the all-in-one agency management solution that gives providers the power to connect care teams, simplify daily tasks, and maintain security and privacy compliance.

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Private Duty Home Care at NAHC is a fully integrated service line of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice focused on Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Innovation exclusively for the private duty home care community.