



HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

Menu

24/7 Hospice Help

888-752-8106

What Will 2021 Bring for Hospice & Palliative Care?

Posted on **Wednesday December 23, 2020** in **Palliative Care, Hospice Education**



Even with the arrival of a vaccine in record time, the very beginning of 2021 will likely look very similar to the darkest days of 2020. On the bright side, new approaches – many propelled by the **COVID-19 pandemic** – continue to advance the care of vulnerable individuals facing their end of life.

Increased overall delivery of palliative care services, which benefits patients immensely, is one of the positive trends heading in to the new year.

According to an analysis by **ATI Advisory** in *Hospice News*, in 2020, **61 health plans nationwide** offered in-home palliative care as a benefit with more than 455,000 beneficiaries enrolled. This is up from just **29 health plans in 2019**.

Hospices provide about **50 percent of home-based palliative care in America**, according to the **Center to Advance Palliative Care**. The number of hospice providers that are diversifying their service lines to include palliative care have also continued to increase.

Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care is a leader among them, having successfully added palliative care to its hospice practice years ago. Today, Crossroads' palliative care service line is growing and evolving under the leadership of **Chief Medical Officer Timothy Ihrig, MD**, an internationally-known palliative care pioneer.

"The frail elderly don't cost health delivery systems a dime," Dr. Ihrig said. "What they do to the seriously ill, with no positive outcomes, that's what costs so much money. The pandemic has exacerbated what was already broken."

What's often forgotten in the mix of aggressive treatment is what the patient truly wants and values, Dr. Ihrig said. That's why he's a fierce advocate for *"true, patient-directed, palliative care that meets individuals where they are on their personal healthcare journey."*



Virtual Palliative Care Visits

During the pandemic, palliative care visits were often virtual and there were, and continue to be, many positive outcomes made possible by this new way of connecting with patients and their families – a second bright spot heading into 2021.

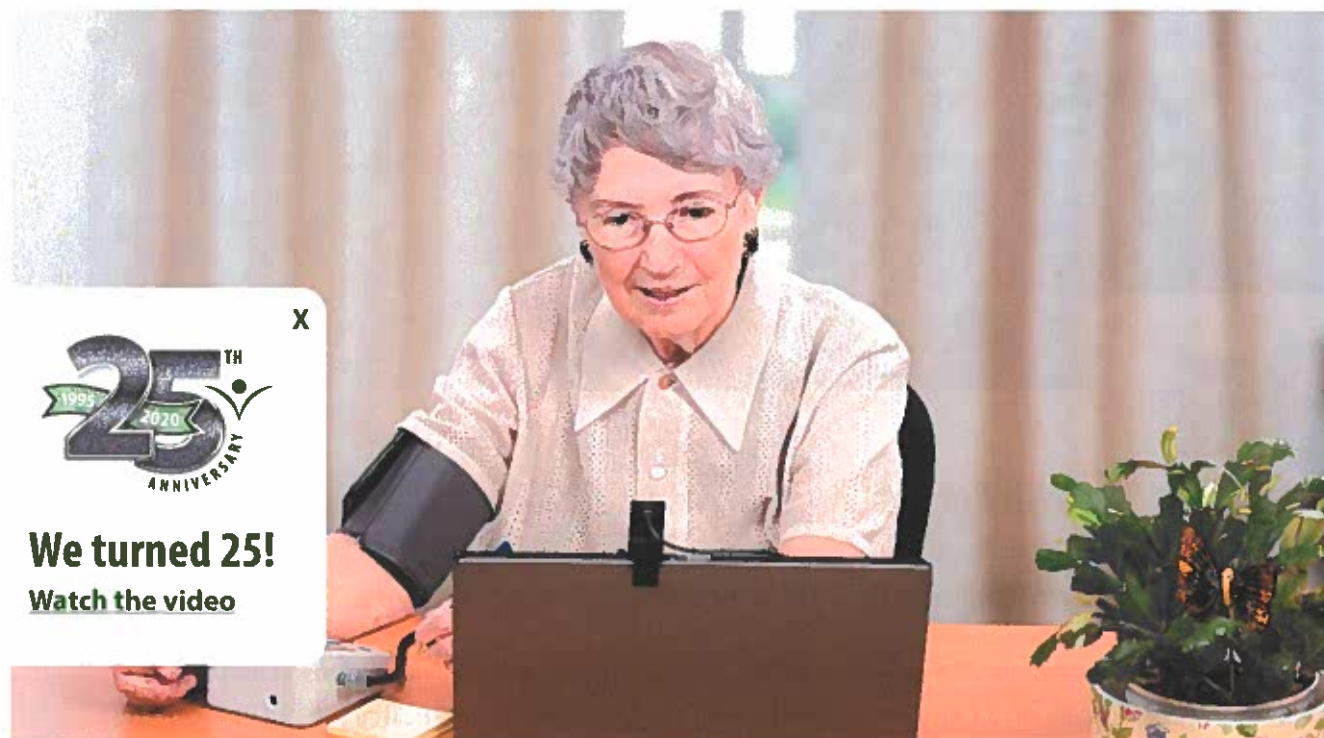
In a recent **Forbes** article, **Shama Hyder** reminded readers that a large reason telehealth providers were able to scale so quickly was because of a relaxation of certain regulations.

"This made it easier for doctors and hospitals to offer telehealth services quickly," Hyder wrote, "without worrying as much about HIPAA privacy requirements or whether patients with Medicaid or Medicare could be eligible for services."

In a recent blog, software company **MobiDev** predicted that the growth of telehealth is here to stay beyond the pandemic.

*"Seventy one percent of patients in the United States considered telemedicine at the beginning of the pandemic and **50 percent have already utilized virtual appointments,**"* the blog states.

*"While telehealth was already rising in popularity in the previous year, the pandemic was a major boost to the industry's development. This boom in telehealth seems likely to break **\$185.6 billion by 2026.**"*



Telehealth and Palliative Care are Complimentary

Crossroads Chief Compliance Officer **DeAnna Looper** knows that telehealth could never entirely replace personal care, even though it's been extremely helpful – especially with geographically-dispersed rural clients.

"It's an added benefit that's complimentary to in-person visits," she said. *"It's actually a way to deliver more,"* which is the hallmark of Crossroads and its approach to delivering end-of-life care.

DeAnna has seen palliative care patients across Crossroads' 11 locations in seven states benefit from telehealth in the COVID-19 era. She sees the trend continuing, especially as seniors continue to battle debilitating isolation and loneliness and providers experience resource and staffing shortages.



X

Issues Will Persist

We turned 25!

[Watch the video](#)

Coming in to 2021 is the severe shortage of healthcare workers. Dr. Ihrig predicts that *“we will face continued logistical staffing and care delivery challenges.”*

Dr. **Amy Hansen, MD, MChD, MEd**, executive vice president of workforce solutions and clinical services at San Diego-based **Aya Healthcare** agrees. In a **Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) blog**, she expressed her concerns.

“I am concerned about burnout and the mental health of the nurses and care providers working today who are living more loss and trauma in a week or month than they may have seen in their entire career,” she said.

Hansen stressed that *“nurses have continued to answer the call, but people shouldn't underestimate the effects on the profession.”*

Dr. Ihrig sees three key reasons for the horrendous staffing shortages healthcare providers are experiencing around the country at this moment in time:

- Because of rampant *“paralytic fear and misinformation”* during the COVID-19 pandemic, workers exited direct care positions.
- Brought on by the crisis, there were high-paying travel positions available in urban centers that drew talent away from healthcare providers in other places.
- A significant percentage of the healthcare workforce is out at any given time because they are sick with coronavirus or quarantining.

Through their shared fog of fatigue, dedicated healthcare workers at Crossroads and other healthcare providers around the country will tell you that they will persevere. It's what they signed up for. Fortunately, with the vaccine finally here, there is every indication that 2021's rough start will improve as we near 2022.

Crossroads provides care and support to patients with a serious or terminal illness. Call 1-888-564-3405 to learn more about our services.

If you found this information helpful, please share it with your network and community.

Related Content

Copyright © 2020 Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care. All rights reserved.



X

We turned 25!

[Watch the video](#)



We turned 25!

[Watch the video](#)

ork?

When someone learns that their kidney disease has advanced to the point where dialysis is required, it can be an upsetting and often overwhelming diagnosis. In the past, dialysis meant spending long hours at a dialysis center several times a week. But kidney dialysis at home is now an option for individuals who are determined to manage their own treatment.

[Read More](#)





Resolutions for the Chronic & Terminally Ill

@AskCrossroads

19 Apr

With the added support and symptom management of #hospice care, patients can



... your best lives in t...
... status/1...

We turned 25!

Watch the video

... in serious illness can
... second. Make your
... own. #NHDD

youtube.com/watch?v=V8q1PS...

15 Apr

Don't wait for April showers to bring you May flowers. Brighten up your rainy days with a colorful #craft that will...

twitter.com/i/web/status/1...

14 Apr

Planning your own #funeral can be a tremendous gift to both yourself and your loved ones during an otherwise diffic...

twitter.com/i/web/status/1...

12 Apr

The #COVID19 Funeral Assistance program

...ve our
...tions c
...ith a ch

...ad Mo



Blog Categories

Hospice Education

Happiness Project

Crossroads News

Real Heroes Wear Dog Tags

Caregiving Tips

Caring More Awards

Gift of a Day

Message from the Founder

Dementia Crafts

Coping with Grief

Palliative Care

Spiritual Care

Voices of Caregiving

Recommended Reading

...ncer. Leukemia affects blood and bone marrow. Lymphoma affects
...nmonly found in the lymph nodes, bone marrow, thymus, and

...ad More

allows families to recover up to \$9,000 in funeral expenses for loved ones...
twitter.com/i/web/status/1...



Want to give back?

DONATE NOW



X



We turned 25!
[Watch the video](#)

Sign up for our email list.

 I am a healthcare provider.

Submit



[Make a Payment](#) [Equal Opportunity](#) [Sitemap](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Reporting A Violation](#)

© 2021 Crossroads Hospice. All Rights Reserved.
Designed by Tag Strategies

homecare
homebase

Smart, scalable solutions
for growing agencies

INVEST WITH THE BEST



Always.
Rely on our experience.

See how we
innovate for you.

MatrixCare
by ResMed

Formerly Brightree Home Health & Hospice

