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HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY

Monthly Teleios Podcast Articles

April 2024

Summary: 60 Selected Articles

Category	# / %
A1 Mission Moments	3 / 5%
A2 Reimbursement Challenges and Warning Signs and Implications	5 / 8%
A3 Competition to be aware of	6/10%
A4 Workforce Challenges	18 /30%
A5 Patient, Family, and Future Customer Demographics and Trends	7/12%
A6 Regulatory and Political	7/12%
A7 Technology and Innovations	8 /13%
A8 Speed of Change and Resiliency and Re-culture	1 / 1%
A9 The Human Factor	3 / 3%
A10Articles of Interest I will highlight	2 / 4%

A1 Mission Moments (N=3)

1. [Viral moment: Hospice worker reunites with former mentor for touching bedside serenade](#)

FaithIt; by Kelsey Straeter; 4/23/24

In Austinburg, Ohio, at the Austinburg Nursing & Rehab Center, a video capturing a deeply moving moment has gone viral, striking a chord with over half a million viewers. The footage shows hospice worker Joshua Woodard singing a heartfelt rendition of "How Great Thou Art" to his former mentor, Mary Redmond, just days before her peaceful passing. ... Decades ago, Mary Redmond was not only a cherished voice and piano teacher in her community but also a vibrant member of the local arts scene, starring in productions such as "Hello, Dolly!" and "The Music Man." ... One of those lives was a young Joshua Woodard ... She became his first voice coach, leaving a lasting impression that endured through the years.

2. [Louisiana ~ Mississippi Hospice & Palliative Care Organization Announcement](#); 4/7/24

Several LMHPCO Board of Directors and Education Committee members, as well as LMHPCO Staff visited (this past week) with the Angola Hospice Volunteers and their Staff. This was the first such meeting post-COVID. An incredible day with an incredible hospice program and LMHPCO is grateful to Tonia Faust (the Angola Hospice Nurse/Volunteer Coordinator and an LMHPCO Education Committee Member) for making this visit possible.

3. **[North Carolina restaurant fulfills woman's dying wish](#)**

ABC News WGNO, by Raven Payne; 4/1/24

It's an act of kindness that cleared away a cloud of grief, crossing state lines. A North Carolina restaurant owner drove six hours to deliver what ended up being the last meal for a woman on her death bed. ... On her deathbed, Bowers had one last wish, a pork plate from Outer Banks restaurant Mama Kwans. But Simmons wondered how they could make it happen. After all, they lived six hours away in West Virginia.

A2 Reimbursement Challenges and Warning Signs and Implications (N=5)

General to Hospice (N=2)

4. **[Home care industry slams finalized 80-20 Rule, warns agency closures are coming](#)**

Home Health Care News, by Andrew Donlan; 4/22/24

The "Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services" rule has been finalized. Most importantly, the bemoaned "80-20" provision has gone through as proposed, meaning providers will eventually be forced to direct 80% of reimbursement for home- and community-based services (HCBS) to caregiver wages.

... Organizations like the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) and LeadingAge immediately condemned the rule being finalized on Monday. ...

5. **[Hospice update: March goes out like a lion](#)**

Morgan Lewis - Health Law Scan, by Howard J. Young; 4/2/24

The old adage—March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb—didn't quite hold true for the hospice sector, which experienced a late-month flurry of activity. The government gave the hospice sector a lot to consider, from MedPAC's suggested freeze on hospice rates to CMS's 2025 Proposed Hospice Rule (public comments due May 28, 2024) that, if finalized as is, would include a 2.6% payment bump. CMS's Proposed Hospice Rule lays the groundwork for the long-anticipated Hospice Outcomes and Patient Evaluation (HOPE) quality measures data collection instrument, which will be used to collect data at various points during the hospice stay, not just at admission and discharge.

Medicare Advantage (N=3)

6. [How MA Plan design affects utilization, health equity](#)

MedCity News, by Marissa Pescia; 4/8/24

A new study found that enrollees with zero-premium MA plans are three times as likely to be non-White compared to other MA enrollees and traditional Medicare enrollees. ... The study was published by Harvard Medical School and Inovalon, a provider of cloud-based software solutions. It used Inovalon's Medical Outcomes Research for Effectiveness and Economics Registry dataset, which "tracks demographic characteristics and outcomes for about 30% of all MA members at any given point in time," according to the report.

7. [Wide variation in differences in resource use seen across conditions between Medicare Advantage, Traditional Medicare](#)

Health Affairs, by Jeah Jung, Caroline S. Carlin, Roger Feldman, Ge Song; 9/23

Medicare Advantage (MA) is a rapidly growing source of coverage for Medicare beneficiaries. Examining how MA performs compared with traditional Medicare is an important policy issue. We analyzed national MA encounter data and found that the adjusted differences in resource use between MA and traditional Medicare varied widely across medical conditions in 2019.

8. [CMS finalizes 2025 Medicare Advantage rates](#)

Becker's Payer Issues, by Rylee Wilson; 4/1/24

CMS finalized a slight decrease in Medicare Advantage benchmark payments for 2025. The agency published its final rate notice for 2025 April 1. The final rule was largely similar to CMS' proposed payment rates issued in January. The agency will cut benchmark payments by 0.16% from 2024 to 2025. CMS estimated plans will see 3.7% higher revenue overall in 2025. MA risk score trend of 3.86% — the average increase in risk adjustment payments year over year — will offset risk model revisions that will lead to a 2.45% decline in revenue and a projected decline in star rating bonuses, according to the agency.

A3 Competition to be aware of (N=6)

General (N=2)

9. [Hospitals cash in on a private equity-backed trend: Concierge physician care](#)

KFF Health News, by Phil Galewitz; 4/1/24

Nonprofit hospitals created largely to serve the poor are adding concierge physician practices, charging patients annual membership fees of \$2,000 or more for easier access to their doctors. It's a trend that began decades ago with

physician practices. Thousands of doctors have shifted to the concierge model, in which they can increase their income while decreasing their patient load. ...

10. [**Kaiser Permanente, Town Hall ventures to launch PACE Program 'Habitat Health'**](#)

Home Health Care News, by Andrew Donlan; 3/27/24

Kaiser Permanente and an investment firm are teaming up to launch a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) venture. Specifically dubbed Habitat Health, Kaiser and Town Hall Ventures will begin building out the program in California in 2025 – in Sacramento and Los Angeles.

M&A (N=4)

11. [**Analysts not ruling out Cigna, Humana merger**](#)

Becker's Payer Issues; by Rylee Wilson; 4/22/24

A merger between Humana and Cigna could still be in the cards according to one analyst, *Bloomberg* reported April 22. "The math now works for a [Cigna and Humana] fusion," Jeffries analyst David Windley wrote April 22. Since the two companies abandoned a proposed merger in December, Cigna's stock prices have risen by 37% and Humana is down 31%, according to *Bloomberg*. Cigna could strike a deal to acquire Humana for around \$420 per share, Mr. Windley wrote in a note to clients. An acquisition would add to Cigna's growth if it does not pay more than \$470 per share for the company, according to Jeffries.

12. [**Kaiser closes Geisinger Health acquisition, forming Risant Health**](#)

Modern Healthcare, by Caroline Hudson; 4/2/24

Kaiser Permanente has acquired Geisinger Health and folded it into Risant Health, a new nonprofit formed to create a national value-based care network.

13. [**Lutheran Senior Services/Diakon agreement forms one of largest US nonprofit LTC organizations**](#)

McKnights Senior Living, by Kathleen Steele Gaivin; 3/29/24

Diakon Senior Living operations and its four continuing care retirement / life plan communities will become part of Lutheran Senior Services under an agreement ... that the organizations say will create one of the largest nonprofit senior living and care organizations in the country. The transaction is pending regulatory approvals and is expected to close this summer.

14. [**\\$45B worth of physician group acquisitions since 2019**](#)

Becker's ASC Review, by Paige Haefele; 3/28/24

Here are 10 of the biggest-budget acquisitions of physician groups, totaling approximately \$45.3 billion, as reported by *Becker's* since 2019: ...

A4 Workforce Challenges (N=18)

Paints picture of the issue (N=2)

15. **[Why so many nurses are fleeing healthcare — and how hospitals can address the problem](#)**

MedCity News, by Katie Adams; 4/10/24

Nearly one-fifth of nurses are projected to leave the healthcare workforce by 2027. The American Organization for Nursing Leadership published a report revealing one of the biggest reasons nurses are exiting the industry: their managers are too busy to train and support them.

16. **[Top factors in nurses ending health care employment between 2018 and 2021](#)**

JAMA Network; by K. Jane Muir, PhD, RN, FNP-BC; Joshua Porat-Dahlerbruch, PhD, RN; Jacqueline Nikpour, PhD, RN; et al; 5/9/24

Question: Why did nurses leave health care employment from 2018 to 2021?
Findings: In this cross-sectional study of 7887 nurses who were employed in a non-health care job, not currently employed, or retired, the top contributing factors for leaving health care employment were planned retirement (39% of nurses), burnout (26%), insufficient staffing (21%), and family obligations (18%). Age distributions of nurses not employed in health care were similar to nurses currently employed in health care.

Implications of the issue (N=5)

17. **[Providence employees awarded \\$98M in wage suit](#)**

Modern Healthcare; by Hayley Desilva; 4/22/24

A jury awarded more than \$98 million to Providence Health and Services employees in a class action lawsuit over claims the health system illegally denied meal breaks and pay for time worked. King County Superior Court Judge Averil Rothrock, who presided over the case, also ruled Thursday that the health system willfully withheld wages, which under Washington state law could entitle workers to double the amount of damages awarded.

18. **[They work 80 hours a week for low pay. Now, California's early-career doctors are joining unions](#)**

Cal Matters, by Kristen Hwang; 4/8/24

... In some California hospitals, early-career doctors make as little as \$16 per hour working 80-hour weeks. It's training, known as residency, that every board-certified doctor must complete. ... Last week, hundreds of resident physicians and fellows at Kaiser Permanente's Northern California facilities became the latest to join the wave of medical trainees demanding better pay and working conditions. Their petition filed with the National Labor Relations Board comes after Kaiser Permanente refused to voluntarily recognize the union.

19. **[Fraudsters sentenced in scheme that distributed 7,600 phony nursing diplomas](#)**

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 4/8/24

Three individuals were sentenced for their role in distributing fraudulent diplomas and transcripts to thousands of nursing students in Florida, New York and New Jersey, the US Attorney's Office disclosed last week. ... Altogether, these individuals were responsible for dispersing more than 7,600 fake credentials, which fraudulently qualified students to sit for exams and obtain licenses as registered nurses or licensed practical nurses. By passing the national nursing board exam, these students were allowed to receive jobs at "unwitting healthcare providers throughout the United States," the Attorney's Office said in a statement. Prosecutors had previously claimed that some of these nurses may have obtained jobs at home health agencies and other healthcare providers in Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Texas.

20. **[Major unions, including SEIU, maintain momentum following 2023 strike upswing](#)**

McKnights Long-Term Care News, by Josh Henreckson; 4/5/24

New analysis of US Department of Labor data shows that large unions such as the SEIU were able to leverage heightened labor activity to recruit new workers in 2023. In a year characterized by headline-grabbing strikes across multiple industries, the long-term care sector has not been without its share of labor activity — such as recent strikes organized by the SEIU to demand higher wages. With so many providers' staffing and funding woes poised to remain at the forefront of sector concerns, some experts suggest that unions may be able to gain even more momentum in the months and years ahead.

21. **[RNs are moving away from home health and hospice, federal survey reveals](#)**

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 4/2/24

Though the number of registered nurses continues to grow, fewer are working in home healthcare and hospice compared to years past, according to the latest national sample survey collected by the Health Resources & Services

Administration. In 2018, there were 179,509 RNs working in home health and hospice, representing about 6% of the nursing workforce, according to an earlier national survey. HRSA's latest count estimated that there were 173,808 RNs in home health and hospice in 2022, or only 5% of the workforce.

Solutions (N=11)

22. **5 steps to cutting the red tape that adds to doctor burnout**

American Medical Association (AMA), by Sara Berge, MS; 4/16/24

... Reducing burnout is essential to high-quality patient care and a sustainable health system. The AMA measures and responds to physician burnout, helping drive solutions and interventions. ... Dr. [Kevin] Hopkins identified the five steps below to get rid of regulatory make-work that interferes with patient care and contributes to physician burnout.

- Identify regulatory burdens ...
- Sort and prioritize the issues ...
- Clarify the confusion ...
- Make the change ...
- Quantify the impact ...

23. **2 federal bills look to boost pipeline of healthcare workers**

McKnights Senior Living, by Kathleen Steele Gaivin; 4/12/24

Bills introduced in both houses of Congress may bolster the healthcare workforce if they become law. Both pieces of legislation are supported by LeadingAge. The bicameral Welcome Back to the Health Care Workforce Act is meant to address the shortage of healthcare workers across the country. Specifically, the legislation would help internationally educated healthcare workers overcome barriers to working in the United States ...

24. **Physician coaching by professionally trained peers for burnout and well-being: A randomized clinical trial**

JAMA Network; by Stephanie B. Kiser, MD, MPH; J. David Sterns, MD, MPH; Po Ying Lai, MS; et al; 4/12/24

Findings: In this randomized clinical trial of 138 physicians, participants who received 3 months of coaching by professionally trained physician peers had a statistically significant reduction in interpersonal disengagement and burnout, with improvement in professional fulfillment and work engagement.

25. **How to become a nurse later in life**

Board Vitals; 4/11/24

Embarking on a career in the nursing field later in life is an inspiring journey that many individuals choose to undertake. Whether it's a personal passion or a long-held dream, it's never too late to pursue a fulfilling career in healthcare. In this guide, we will answer the most common questions asked by those starting a nursing career later in life.

Editor's Note: Does your hospice or palliative care organization partner with a nursing school? Or with any other type of university, community college, etc. that educates professionals for roles used in your organization? Explore opportunities to instill information and interest in end-of-life care.

26. **['Ladders and lattices' provide career opportunities for CNAs](#)**

McKnights Senior Living, by Kathleen Steele Gaivin; 4/10/24

Providers would be wise to help certified nursing assistants advance in their careers, according to an article in *Caring for the Ages*, a publication of AMDA—The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. "One promising concept involves career ladders and lattices," wrote Joanne Kaldy, senior contributor. "As a CNA, ladders enable you to pursue opportunities to move 'up the ladder' into other positions, such as licensed practical nurse (LPN), registered nurse (RN), or administrator. ..."

27. **[Improved onboarding process could boost worker retention](#)**

McKnights Senior Living, by Kathleen Steel Gaivin; 4/8/24

As long-term care providers navigate post-pandemic workforce challenges, they also need to improve the onboarding process, according to the results of a new survey by Viventium. ... The study detailed in the company's 2024 Caregiver Onboarding Experience Report solicited responses from 175 administrators and caregivers in skilled nursing, assisted living, independent living, home health, home care and hospice care in November and December. The survey, Viventium said, found a "shockingly low bar for what passes as a 'good' onboarding experience, with strong indications that raising that bar could correlate to higher retention rates."

Editor's Note: See the article in today's newsletter, "A day in the life: Hospice nurse" for the importance of onboarding hospice nurses to differences between long-term care and hospice care.

28. **[Frontline burnout in healthcare: A growing crisis demands action](#)**

MedCity News, by Russ Richmond; 4/4/24

... The healthcare industry faces a critical challenge: rampant burnout among its workforce. Recent data paints a concerning picture: 46% of healthcare workers report feeling burned out (CDC), and 41% of nurses in direct patient care roles

are considering leaving their roles (McKinsey). These numbers – significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels – point towards systemic issues demanding immediate attention. ... [Health systems] need multifaceted strategies:

- Investing in leadership ...
- Elevating employee voice ...
- Investing in team members ...
- Empowering frontline leaders: Enabling meaningful engagement ...
- Elevating employee voice: Listening and taking action ...
- Investing in team members: making work more than just a paycheck ...
 - Professional development ...
 - Celebrating success ...
 - Mental health support ...
- Investing in our healthcare workforce: A shared responsibility ...

29. **[Optimizing RN responsibilities 'more essential' than staffing hours: study](#)**

McKnights Long-Term Care News, by Josh Henreckson; 4/2/24

... [New] analysis suggests that optimizing the role of registered nurses would be an even more effective way of increasing quality of care. Care quality would strongly benefit from an industry-wide focus on the responsibilities of RNs, the study's authors said. Specifically, leaders should more actively differentiate RNs from licensed practical nurses, use a nursing practice model framework to maximize the role of RNs and provide RNs with more education in leadership and geriatric care.

30. **[Fostering respect and appreciation seen as keys to retaining direct care workers](#)**

McKnights Online Forum, by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 3/27/24

Expressions of appreciation and respect can go a long way in addressing senior living's direct care [workforce](#) crisis, according to a panel of direct workers and employers who addressed what makes employees want to stay — or go. ... Nate Hamme, president and executive director of the Ceca Foundation, ... said that the most important part of employee recognition is listening to people. ... He added that there is a science to recognition backed by research into what motivates people and implementing programs around that. ... Recognition programs, Hamme added, should focus on IMPACT: inclusive, mission-aligned, public, authentic, consistent and timely.

31. **[The operational advantages of hiring seniors to provide home care](#)**

Home Health Care News, by Joyce Famakinwa; 4/1/24

Seniors Helping Seniors has long distinguished itself from other home care companies by hiring active seniors to serve as caregivers. Josh Obeiter — an owner of one of the company's franchise locations — has seen even more added value from this strategy as the industry at large combats labor shortages. At Seniors Helping Seniors, the average age of an employee is around 70 years old, and 80% of caregivers are in their 60s and 70s, according to Obeiter.

32. [**The Workforce Management Playbook: How Mercy is empowering nurses, saving premium labor costs + improving care**](#)

Becker's Hospital Review in collaboration with Trusted Health; 3/29/24

At Becker's 11th Annual CEO + CFO Roundtable, in a session sponsored by Trusted Health, two leaders from Mercy (St. Louis) — Cheryl Matejka, CFO, and Betty Jo Rocchio, DNP, senior vice president and system chief nursing officer — discussed how the right workforce management platform can help organizations redesign their staffing models in tune with nurses' evolving needs, while saving costs and improving operational efficiency. In Mercy's presentation to over roughly 100 hospital executives there were three major themes.

1. In the post-pandemic era, organizations must strive for a multi-generational staffing model redesign ...
2. Successfully redesigning the staffing model requires transforming 4 key elements ...
3. Increasing flexibility and autonomy in staffing translates to cost, time + FTE savings ...

A5 Patient, Family, and Future Customer Demographics and Trends (N=7)

33. [**JAMA Revisited, from May 1924: The Promise of a Longer Lifetime**](#)

JAMA; 4/18/2024.

Originally published May 10, 1924 | *JAMA*. 1924;82(19):1518-1519.

Editor's Note: Yes. This article's original date is May 10, 1924; one hundred years ago, shortly after coming through the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-1919.

Modern hygiene has been described as the reaction against the old fatalistic creed that deaths inevitably occur at a constant rate. The study of vital statistics shows that there is no "iron law of mortality." ... The New York report states that the increase in the expectation of life has been almost entirely confined to the ages before 35 years. In the future, the health officer must, of necessity, consider steps to be taken to minimize the mortality among those of middle and advanced life. There is much to encourage man today to seek to secure a normal lifetime.

34. **[Change in long-term care: Nursing homes across U.S. closing](#)**

limaohio.com, by Precious Grundy; 4/19/24

... According to the American Health Care Association website, more than 1,000 nursing homes have closed in the United States since 2015. ... According to the Population Reference Bureau website, in 2050 the population older than 65 will increase from 58 million (in 2022) to 82 million in just a few decades. The topic of long-term care will remain in question. The American Health Care Association also said nursing homes across the United States have closed due to staffing shortages. ... Older adults now have the option of a home health aide, assisted living facilities and family caregivers.

Editor's Note: How is this trend playing out in your service area? How do these closures impact hospital discharges? Your referral sources? Your hospice patients in skilled nursing facilities and memory care units? Acuity of patient care needs in the home, assisted living? Hospital-in-the-home? The palliative care services you provide?

35. **[\\$1 billion class action settlement will trigger transition of 2,400 nursing home residents to other settings](#)**

McKnights Senior Living, by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 4/19/24

The [\\$1 billion settlement](#) of a class action lawsuit has the potential to see 2,400 Massachusetts nursing home residents move into other residential and community settings in the next decade. The options include assisted living communities, although state senior living experts say that it's unlikely many of those transitions will be to assisted living. The state agreed to settle the suit, initially filed in 2022 by six disabled nursing homes residents who argued that a lack of state resources "trapped" them in nursing homes despite their wishes to return to community-based care settings.

36. **[Home care sees largest price jump in history, BLS report finds](#)**

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 4/15/24

The cost of home care rose faster than ever in the last year, far outpacing inflation across every other healthcare spending category, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest Consumer Price Index report. Home care costs rose 14.2% between March 2023 and March 2024 — its most rapid growth since BLS began tracking data for the segment in 2005, according to the CPI. ... During the same period, standard inflation for all medical care services was 2.1%. The costs of hospital services — outpatient hospital services (8.3%), general hospital services (7.5%) and inpatient hospital services (6.9%) — saw the next-highest

inflation rates since March 2023, eclipsed only by home care services. Meanwhile, prices for nursing home and adult day service rose by about 3.9%.

Editor's Note: This article did not specify cost changes for hospice care.

37. **[Healthcare on the brink: navigating the challenges of an aging society in the United States](#)**

npj Aging, by Charles H. Jones and Mikael Dolsten; 4/6/24

The US healthcare system is at a crossroads. With an aging population requiring more care and a strained system facing workforce shortages, capacity issues, and fragmentation, innovative solutions and policy reforms are needed. ... Through a comprehensive analysis of the impact of an aging society, this work highlights the urgency of addressing this issue and the importance of restructuring the healthcare system to be more efficient, equitable, and responsive.

38. **[As America's population ages, women shoulder the burden as primary caregivers](#)**

PBS News; by Ali Rogin, Claire Mufson, and Satvi Sunkara; 3/30/24

Currently, 1 in 6 Americans is older than 65, a number that's projected to rise to 1 in 4 by 2050. As older Americans' needs for medical care and other support grow, women bear the biggest part of the burden of caring for them. Ali Rogin speaks with some women about their experiences and author Emily Kenway about the often-unseen costs of caregiving.

39. **[Global Medical Tourism Report 2024: Numbers, prospects and problems](#)**

Business Wire; 4/1/24

Medical tourism has been touted as the next big thing for many years. ... Medical tourism refers to the practice of individuals traveling across borders to receive medical treatment or healthcare services. ... This global phenomenon has gained significant traction in recent years due to various factors such as cost savings, high-quality healthcare facilities, and accessibility to advanced medical treatments.

Editor's Note: The term "medical tourism" appears increasingly in use.

A6 Regulatory and Political (N=7)

40. **[Breaking News: Labor Department announces final overtime rule](#)**

McKnights Senior Living; by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 4/23/24

The Department of Labor on Tuesday announced a final rule that expands overtime protections to millions of salaried workers beginning this summer. The overtime rule increases the salary thresholds necessary to exempt a salaried

executive, administrative or professional employee from federal overtime pay requirements. Effective July 1, the salary threshold will increase to the equivalent of an annual salary of \$43,888 and will increase to \$58,656 on Jan. 1. The July 1 increase updates the current annual salary threshold of \$35,568, which is based on a 2019 overtime rule update.

41. [**Examining how improper payments cost taxpayers billions and weaken Medicare and Medicaid**](#)

HHS-OIG; by Christi A. Grimm, Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 4/16/24

HHS Inspector General Christi A. Grimm Testifies Before the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on April 16, 2024. IG Grimm briefs members on HHS-OIG's work to address improper payments in Medicare and Medicaid managed care programs. [Click here to watch the testimony.](#)

42. [**Private Equity: Proposed Health Over Wealth Act - What this means for you**](#)

JD Supra, by Roger Strobe; 4/11/24

On April 3, 2024, Senators Edward Markey ... and Elizabeth Warren ... chaired a Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Subcommittee ... titled, *When Health Care Becomes Wealth Care: How Corporate Greed Puts Patient Care and Health Workers at Risk*. As part of the hearing process, Senator Markey released his new legislative agenda that calls for transparency and accountability for private equity (PE) in health care. ... The bill would require PE-backed or other for-profit owned providers (those providing services covered by Medicare under 42 U.S.C. Section 1395d) such as hospitals, hospice, nursing homes, and certain other facilities, to annually report to HHS on all manner of things including, but not limited to ... [click on the title's link for the list].

43. [**Navigating new requirements in the 2025 proposed Hospice Rule**](#)

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 3/5/24

If the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) proposed 2025 hospice rule is finalized as written, hospices may encounter some hurdles implementing some of the new requirements. MS late last month issued its proposed hospice rule for 2025. The proposal called for a [2.6% increase](#) in hospice per diem base rates, a number that many stakeholders say is insufficient in today's economic climate.

44. [**It's past time for an upgrade to the Medicare Hospice Benefit**](#)

Health Affairs, by Cara L. Wallace and Stephanie P. Wladkowski; 4/5/24

When most people think about hospice care, they imagine someone such as the late Rosalynn Carter, who enrolled onto hospice and died within a few days. Jimmy Carter's long hospice stay, now more than a year, has shown a different model for hospice—one that supports its mission to help people live well, with dignity and quality of life, for whatever time remains. However, current policy restrictions to enroll and remain on hospice make it difficult for many hospice recipients to receive hospice care for "whatever time remains," as 17.2 percent of Medicare hospice patients are discharged alive.

Editor's Note: Many hospices used Jimmy Carter's one-year anniversary as a marketing tool that hospice is not really for the "dying." Many--if not most--of these articles were not transparent in identifying any type of recertification, decertification, or revocation processes. Yes, while it may be past time for CMS to upgrade the Hospice Benefit, it's also past time for hospice marketing to be more transparent with the public.

45. [**Proposed hospice rule offers key quality improvement changes, experts offer**](#)

McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 4/4/24

While the recently proposed 2025 hospice payment update included a payment adjustment that stakeholders have perceived as inadequate, it also introduced valuable new tools to address hospice quality and more, according to industry regulatory experts. One of the [proposed rule's](#) most enticing features is the Hospice Outcomes and Patient Evaluation (HOPE) tool, which next year will replace the current Hospice Item Set (HIS) measurement system used by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to track hospice quality.

46. [**Hospital charity care falls short of nonprofit tax breaks: Lown**](#)

Modern Healthcare, by Caroline Hudson; 3/26/24

The vast majority of nonprofit hospitals aren't providing a level of community support equal to the value of what they are receiving in tax breaks, according to a study published Tuesday. ... Using 2021 Internal Revenue Service data, Lown found about 80% of nonprofit hospitals, or more than 1,900 out of 2,425 hospitals, received more in tax break benefits than the support provided to communities.

A7 Technology and Innovations (N=8)

47. [**30 systems sign on to new effort to advance age-friendly care**](#)

Becker's Clinical Leadership, by Erica Carbajal; 4/17/24

Thirty health systems are participating in a new [collaborative](#) through the Institute for Healthcare Improvement that aims to accelerate the adoption of age-friendly care for older adults. The Age-Friendly System-Wide Spread Collaborative is billed as a learning and action community through which systems will focus on embedding four evidence-based elements of high-quality care for older adults: what matters, medication, mentation and mobility, known as the 4Ms. Participants — which include Los Angeles-based Cedars Sinai, New York City-based Mount Sinai Health System and Atlanta-based Grady Health — will share data and collaborate to advance their own improvements in scaling age-friendly care across their sites of care. Participants also have the opportunity to be among the first to achieve a new IHI recognition for systemwide adoption of the 4Ms.

48. [**VR off a smartphone? Tech breakthrough could allow seniors to do away with clunky headsets**](#)

McKnights Senior Living, by Aaron Dorman; 4/11/24

Virtual reality is becoming more and more popular among older adults. Could the next innovation allow them to experience VR from their smartphone? A full-color, three-dimensional display can be generated off of a smartphone screen, according to new research. Such a breakthrough would make it even easier, and cost-effective, for senior living providers to offer VR and augmented reality content for residents or allow for new telehealth opportunities. The technology would involve only a smartphone screen and a second screen called a “spatial light modulator” to create the multi-layered image.

Editor's Note: On 2/23/24 we posted ["We gave palliative care patients VR therapy. More than 50% said it helped reduce pain and depression symptoms"](#)

49. [**Modern ultrasound tech benefits extend from Alzheimer's to palliative care**](#)

McKnights Senior Living, by Aaron Dorman; 4/9/24

New research is showing that ultrasound innovations can be ultra-beneficial to seniors across a wide range of applications. ... [A] valuable use of ultrasound tech could be in palliative care. Portable or handheld ultrasound diagnostic tools could allow for more effective treatment options, and reduce the need for costly rehospitalizations. These imaging tools are already available and researchers conducted a narrative study of existing literature that appeared to validate their effectiveness; based on previous findings, new portable ultrasound devices made a difference in 50% of treatment decisions, the researchers found.

50. [**Telehealth effective in supporting rural caregivers**](#)

Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 4/3/24

Palliative care delivered via telehealth is effective at improving access to caregiver support. Moreover, these services can also be cost-effective, recent research has found. ... “[Technology-enhanced transitional palliative care] is a feasible, low cost and sustainable strategy to enhance [family caregiver] support in rural areas,” researches indicated in the study. “Potential reimbursement mechanisms are available to offset the costs to the health system for providing transitional palliative care to caregivers of patients recently hospitalized.”

51. **[USDA Rural Development accepting applications for grants to fund high-speed Internet and digital equipment for rural and tribal communities](#)**

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, by Leigh Hallet; 4/4/24

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development invites grant applications for two programs that fund broadband access. The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program helps organizations provide online training, education, and health services. It funds services, training, and equipment to digitally connect people to education, training, and health care resources.

52. **[The iconic stethoscope is getting a 21st century makeover](#)**

Managed Healthcare Executive, by Peter Wehrwein; 4/4/24

Two years ago, a pair of New Zealand physicians wrote an opinion piece in a peer-reviewed journal of the Royal Australasian of Physicians about point-of-care ultrasound. The gist of their argument was that ultrasound ought to be used more routinely to detect various heart and lung conditions. The somewhat cheeky title of that article is “Update on Echocardiography: Do We Still Need a Stethoscope?” Jason Bellet has spent more than a decade making pretty much the opposite case: Not only do healthcare professionals still need a stethoscope, they need a vastly improved, 21st century version that harnesses digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI).

53. **[FDA approves AI Tool that can detect sepsis](#)**

Forbes, by Cailey Gleeson; 4/3/24

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration [approved](#) an AI tool that can diagnose sepsis, Prenosis, the company behind the software, announced Wednesday, the latest in a series of agency approvals for AI diagnostic tools. ... At least 350,000. That’s how many adults who develop sepsis die from the condition or are discharged to hospice annually, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

54. **[Palliative care could be a game changer for public health](#)**

Harvard Public Health, by Meredith Lidard Kleeman; 4/4/24

California and Hawaii are pioneering ways to expand access. ... California is one of the first states in the country to require insurance companies that administer Medicaid benefits to fully cover palliative care services for eligible residents. ... Palliative care is poised to be a game changer for public health. Nearly 50 percent of states now include palliative care services for eligible Medicaid recipients, according to C-TAC. And in California and Hawaii, two paths are being forged toward wider palliative care access. ...

- The California model changes who pays for palliative care ...
- Hawaii develops a model beyond palliative care vs. hospice ...

A8 Speed of Change and Resiliency and Re-culture (N=1)

55. **[Lens X: A practical approach to taking care of your people](#)**

The Journal of Character & Leadership Development, by Daphne DePorres, Matthew Orlowsky, Matthew Horner, David Levy; 4/24

Graduates of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), as commissioned officers, are charged to “take care of their people.” While this leadership aphorism makes sense, this article describes what it means in practice. An interdisciplinary USAFA team explored the dynamics of leader development from multiple angles, resulting in a focus on two dimensions (or “lenses”) that help a leader understand what actions can be taken to help an employee achieve subjective well-being at work. The intent is to draw attention to the nature of the interaction with organizational members that foster engagement and need fulfillment. We do that by focusing a leader’s attention on needs, narratives, and micro-exchanges. Those interactions, behaviors, and micro-exchanges are the foundations of and the most tangible, changeable element of climate and culture. This practical lens equips any leader to seize every opportunity to foster fulfillment of the psychological needs for belonging, agency, and efficacy. This framework can be used by anyone but is particularly relevant to supervisors and USAFA cadets who will be entrusted to lead an all-volunteer military force.

Publisher's note: An interesting article on leadership and change management by my friend and colleague Dave Levy, PhD, Professor of Management and Leadership at the US Air Force Academy. He also co-authored three books: [The 52nd floor: Thinking deeply about leadership](#), [Attitudes aren't free: Thinking](#)

[deeply about diversity in the US Armed Forces](#) and [Echoes of mind: Thinking deeply about humanship.](#)

A9 The Human Factor (N=3)

56. [Longevity: Why are we all so focused on living longer instead of living better?](#)

The Montecito Journal, by Deann Zampelli; 4/16/24

I admit it. I am an obit reader. I look at the photo first to see if I know them and then almost reflexively at their age. 89? Not bad. 76? Too early. 56. ... Recently I had a client who came to see me because she wanted to live the next chapter of her life on her own terms, not as her mother did in the last decade of life before dying at the age of 93; bed pans, caregivers, wheelchairs, numerous medications, memory loss and the utter decimation of her life savings. ... In many cultures the elders are revered and live with their families until they die. They aren't just included, they are needed, consulted, and cherished. Not surprisingly, these are often the same cultures that enjoy the healthiest and longest lives. Sadly, Americans are not among them. ...

57. [Living to 100: Making Maryland a 'Blue Zone'](#)

The Baltimore Sun, commentary by Raya Elfadhel Kheirbek; 4/5/24

In a bold stride toward redefining the approach to aging, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore signed an executive order in January aimed at expanding access to critical care and services for older Marylanders. ... At the heart of this initiative, dubbed *Longevity Ready Maryland*, is a comprehensive plan that transcends traditional state efforts focused solely on eldercare. Instead, it adopts a holistic, multisector approach that promises a transformative impact and enrichment in every dimension — health, financial security, social connectivity and purposeful living, irrespective of a Marylander's socioeconomic status.

58. [Michael Dowling: 9 healthcare nuances that defy simple criticisms](#)

Becker's Hospital Review; by Michael J. Dowling; 3/28/24

Those who work in healthcare should be proud of the distinct role we play in our communities and society. ... Beyond all the numbers and details, it is important to understand that healthcare is deeply human and personal. We are all potential patients — many of us have already been. ... [Click on the article's title for Dowling's 9 differences and distinctions for nonprofit healthcare.]

A10 Articles of Interest I will highlight (N=2)

59. [Home Healthcare Market worth \\$383.0 billion by 2028](#)

Iowanews Headlines; 4/11/24

[The] Home Healthcare Market in terms of revenue was estimated to be worth \$250.0 billion in 2023 and is poised to reach \$383.0 billion by 2028, growing at a CAGR of 8.9% from 2023 to 2028 according to a new report by MarketsandMarkets™. The primary drivers propelling the growth of this market are the aging population, rising healthcare expenditures, and the increased need for home care due to technological advancements in home healthcare. ... The home healthcare market on the basis of service is divided into skilled nursing services, rehabilitation therapy services, hospice & palliative care services, unskilled care services, respiratory therapy services, infusion therapy services, and pregnancy care services.

60. **[\[Rural Hospitals\] A popular healthcare myth debunked](#)**

Becker's Hospital CFO Report, by Laura Dyrda; 3/28/24

Many in the healthcare industry assume rural hospitals are inherently worse off financially than urban hospitals. It's easy to see why. ... But a February Kaufman Hall [report](#) refutes the financial divide between rural and urban hospitals. When comparing rural and urban hospitals as a collective, the firm found no statistically significant difference in average operating margin. Rural and urban hospitals on average have similar operating margins and financial performance. So why do we often associate more dire financial struggles with rural hospitals over urban ones?