



Top News Stories of the Month, November 2024

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A3 Competition to be Aware of	6	12.8
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Totals	47	100

A1 Mission Moments

1 [National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation celebrates National Hospice and Palliative Care Month](#)

National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI); 10/31/24

In honor of National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, NPHI also shines a spotlight on the true Care Heroes—the dedicated professionals and volunteers who provide compassionate care to those facing terminal or serious illnesses. Their dedication to ensuring comfort, dignity, and quality of life is the foundation of hospice and palliative care. These Care Heroes make a profound impact on the lives of patients and their families, offering essential support during some of life’s most challenging moments. “We celebrate and recognize the invaluable contributions of these Care Heroes—the extraordinary individuals who are delivering exceptional quality care each and every day,” stated Tom Outaouais, CEO. “We invite everyone to join us in sharing their positive experiences of working, volunteering, or caring for those at the end of life.” “This November is a time to recognize the essential role of hospice and palliative care providers in our communities,” stated Carole Fisher, president. “We invite everyone to join us in spreading the word about the impact of these services and in celebrating the



dedicated professionals who provide this critical care. To participate in National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, NPHI encourages everyone to join the conversation online using the hashtags #CareHeroes, #HAPCM, #HospiceCare, and #PalliativeCare. You can also explore our Public Outreach Toolkit for more guidance.

Editor's note: NPHI is a sponsor for this newsletter.

2 [We invite you to listen to our latest podcast: Imagine Heaven, with John Burke](#)

TCN Talks (Teleios Collaborative Network); podcast by Chris Comeaux; 10/30/24

In this inspiring episode of TCNtalks, Chris Comeaux sits down with John Burke, New York Times bestselling author of *Imagine Heaven* and *Imagine the God of Heaven*, for a soul-stirring conversation on near-death experiences (NDEs) and their profound implications. John shares the overwhelming evidence of the commonalities of near-death experiences (NDEs) and the evidence that supports their validity from across the world and from across many different cultures. Chris begins by recounting his own transformative experience reading *Imagine Heaven* over his summer sabbatical, describing it as a refreshing oasis for the parched soul. John delves into the fascinating and consistent patterns found in NDEs worldwide, revealing how people from vastly different backgrounds describe similar encounters of leaving their bodies, seeing with a spiritual clarity—even those blind from birth—and entering realms filled with light, love, and peace.

3 [Local veteran continues to serve by visiting hospice veterans](#)

Lundington Daily News, Lundington, MI; by Shanna Avery; 11/9/24

With love of service to their country, some veterans continue to find ways to serve and make a difference, and Ludington veteran Dick Gregaitis does just that when he visits other veterans as they approach the end of their lives. Gregaitis has been volunteering with Hospice of Michigan in the local area for eight years, where he visits veteran patients. Gregaitis served in the U.S. Navy from Aug. 1962 to 1965, then the U.S. Air Force until he retired in 1986 as senior master sergeant. Gregaitis said he has been around this area, and met his wife of 55 years at Round Lake. He traveled all over while in the military. It is through his own experiences, he shares a bond with other veterans. "To me, it is a way to give back to the community," he said. "A lot of veterans don't get people stopping by or talking. They like someone there that knows about the military. I even designed a badge that says, 'military outreach.' It is a win/win. I like to do it and I have the time to do it, and they like someone to say hi to."



4 Mom of 4 is placed in hospice care 2 weeks before son's wedding. On his big day, she's on the dance floor with a smile (exclusive)

People; by Jordan Greene; 11/14/24

... In October, before entering hospice care, Liv recalls how her mom was in the hospital, and all she could talk about was attending the wedding. With Olivia's health deteriorating, Liv says her brother Salvatore and his fiancée Kelsey had even considered holding the wedding ceremony in the hospital room if necessary. But that contingency plan quickly became unnecessary. On Nov. 2, their mom defied expectations and arrived at Basilica Hudson in Hudson, New York, alongside the other 105 guests to watch her son walk down the aisle — turning the hopes of her kids and everyone else in attendance into a reality. In fact, Liv says her mom exceeded even the best-case scenario the family had imagined. ... "Life is unexpectedly short. We have ideas in our mind on how we think our life is going to go, but it does not always pan out that way," [Liv] adds. "Cherish your loved ones while they are here and be present to really appreciate the important things in your life."

5 Community carolers share love with Bartlesville's 'Santa' on his final journey home

Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters - Bartlesville, Oklahoma; by Nathan Thompson; 11/9/24

He's been known as Bartlesville's very own Santa for more than three decades, and on Saturday night dozens of community members showered Ron Adams with the blessing of love and Christmas carols as he faces the final moments of his life. Earlier this year, Adams was diagnosed with stage-four liver cancer. His health has rapidly deteriorated and he is in hospice care at The Journey Home between Bartlesville and Dewey. Debbie Neece, a friend of the family, says she received a phone call from Adams' daughter, Lindsey, Saturday morning with a special request. Neece made it happen as a fitting tribute to a Bartlesville icon and his family. ... Saturday's love from the community gathering and singing more than 20 minutes of Christmas carols had a profound impact



on Ron, his wife Debi and his daughter Lindsey. Lindsey came outside and in tears, thanked the gathered crowd. A small blessing of Christmas music. A large outpouring of love from the community. But not as large as Ron Adams' heart and his devotion to bringing joy as Bartlesville's Santa.

6 After Hurricane Helene, the VA in Western NC is making sure that no veteran is left behind

Southern Living; by Abigail Wilt; 11/11/24

The agency has contacted 100% of the high-risk veterans they identified before the storm—some visits requiring mile-long hikes up unstable mountainous terrain. As Western North Carolina continues to pick up the pieces on a long road to recovery following the devastation of Hurricane Helene, teams from the local VA are going above and beyond to care for veterans. ... That service extended deep into the mountains. Prior to the storm, the VA identified over 2,600 vulnerable veterans at highest risk, including patients going through chemo treatments and those with spinal cord injuries, mobility issues, and home oxygen needs. When the floodwaters hit, the Emergency Department never closed. Immediately following Helene, the VA began addressing the oxygen needs of 1200 vulnerable veterans, Young shared, and a task force was mobilized to perform wellness checks. But as many roads were washed out and phone and internet service inconsistent, these wellness checks often took the form of compassion on foot. "We contacted 100% of the high-risk veterans, either by phone or in person at their homes," Young said. "Some visits required mile-long hikes up unstable mountainous terrain to reach veterans, including those determined to stay in their homes."

7 Tech executive's moving goodbye as he enters hospice goes viral: 'I love that we existed together'

NBC Today Show; by Alex Portée; 11/13/24

In the final stages of Stage 4 cancer, former Postmates executive James Butts shared a



heartfelt message that is resonating with thousands: "Be principled, be an idealist. Most importantly, be a decent human." In a post shared on his X account Nov. 13, Butts confirmed that he was entering hospice. Butts was a senior vice president of product and design at Postmates for nearly six years and is a co-founder of OrderAhead, according to his LinkedIn page. "I'm entering hospice today. Will probably update (very) little if at all," Butts announced on X regarding his transition to end-of-life care. ... Butts' words have received nearly 7.6 million views on the platform and over 98,000 likes within the day of being posted. "I don't know you, but I am moved by your message," one user wrote in response to his X post. "Sending you and your loved ones strength."

8 Facing terminal cancer, former flight attendant granted final wish to fly one last time

CBS News 13, Sacramento, CA; by Ashley Sharp; 11/19/24

A special last wish was granted for a Calaveras County hospice patient facing a daunting diagnosis. Janet McAnnally, 79, was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer which spread to her spine. She knows she doesn't have long, but that did not stop the former flight attendant from taking to the skies one last time. ... McAnnally is now in the care of Hospice of Amador and Calaveras, ... Turning the page back to 1971, McAnnally was a flight attendant for seven years for Trans World Airlines, based in Chicago. ... The hospice center, under its Last Wish Program, reached out to local United Airlines pilot Rob Davids to help fulfill McAnnally's wish for one final flight high above Calaveras County. "I just felt lucky to be part of it and give her that chance," Davids said. "I just appreciate every flight like it's the last." At 79, for the first time, McAnnally even got to pilot the plane herself during their hour-long flight. ...

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A2 Reimbursement Challenges, Warning Signs, and Implications

A. General to Hospice

9 [CMS finalizes 2.9% cut in physician payments for 2025, including for palliative care](#)

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 11/4/24

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has finalized a nearly 2.9% cut for 2025 in physician payment rates used to reimburse Palliative Care practitioners, among other professionals. The [final rule](#) also states that the telehealth flexibilities implemented during the COVID-19 public health emergency will expire at the end of this year unless Congress intervenes. Physicians and other professionals will have to follow pre-COVID restrictions on telehealth, with few exceptions. Industry organizations were quick to denounce the pay cut. "To put it bluntly, Medicare plans to pay us less while costs go up. You don't have to be an economist to know that is an unsustainable trend, though one that has been going on for decades," American Medical Association President Dr. Bruce Scott said in a statement.

10 [Statement from NPHI on US election results](#)

National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI); Press Release; 11/6/24

On November 6th, the Associated Press declared that Donald Trump is the new president-elect of the United States. In response to this news, the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI) issued the following statement from Tom Koutsoumpas, our CEO:

"Following the election of President-Elect Donald Trump, the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI) reiterates its dedication to advocating for high-quality, compassionate care for all patients and families facing serious illness. NPHI looks forward to collaborating with the incoming administration and new Congress to address critical needs in healthcare policy, expand support for advanced illness care, and work toward a stronger healthcare future for patients, families, and caregivers alike. ... [\[Click here to read the full statement.\]](#) ... At NPHI, we are committed to ensuring that every American has access to dignified, high-quality care. We will work with the new administration to protect and enhance the Medicare hospice benefit, expand access to high-quality care at home, and advance policy solutions that center on patient needs and community well-being."



11 **Empassion achieves \$34 million in savings in novel Medicare program serving high needs patients**

Globe Newswire, New York City; 11/21/24

Empassion Health, Inc., the nation's largest managed care provider of high-quality end-of-life care for adults living with serious illness so that they can have more good days, today reported near-record results for four Medicare Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) serving Original Medicare lives in 35 states.

Specifically, Empassion achieved total gross savings of \$34.1m in the High Needs Population Track of ACO REACH for Performance Year 2023 while managing a record number of lives – nearly 9,000 across 35 states – in total cost-of care arrangements. This includes a 50-percent reduction of unnecessary hospital stays. Empassion also earned the highest quality scores for provider communication and care coordination. "While we are enormously proud of the \$34 million in Medicare savings, more important is that Empassion provided high-quality end-of-life care for adults living with serious illness so that they had more good days," said Robin Heffernan, the CEO of Empassion. "These outcomes are specific to Empassion and its unique model. ..."

B. Medicare Advantage

12 **How hospices can leverage palliative care to 'stay relevant' in value-based care**

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 11/6/24

U.S. health care is moving steadily towards value-based reimbursement, and having a robust palliative care program can help hospices ensure they are not left behind. The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is working to ensure that 100% of Medicare beneficiaries are aligned with a risk-based payment model by 2030. This can include Medicare Advantage (MA) and Accountable Care Organization (ACO) programs. With hospice reimbursement confined to the traditional Medicare benefit, a palliative care program is a likely entry point for those providers to access value-based reimbursement, Sue Lynn Schramm, a partner of the hospice and palliative care consulting company Confidis LLC, said in a presentation at the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization Annual Leadership Conference. This may be even more the case now that the hospice component of the value-based insurance design model



(VBID), often called the Medicare Advantage Hospice Carve-In, is ending on Dec. 31, Schramm said.

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A3 Competition to be Aware of

13 [Payers push into home health: 5 things to know](#)

Becker's Payer Issues; by Rylee Wilson; 11/4/24

Payers are expanding their reach into home healthcare. In October, Elevance Health said it plans to acquire CareBridge, a Nashville-based home and community care provider. Elevance will pay \$2.7 billion for the company, according to the *Nashville Business Journal*. Elevance CEO Gail Boudreaux told investors on an October 17th the acquisition will serve as the foundation for Carelon's home health business. Here are five more things to know about payers' ventures into home health:

1. UnitedHealthcare is planning to acquire Amedisys, which provides home health, hospice and high-acuity care in 37 states. Regulators have yet to approve the deal and could choose to block it. In 2023, UnitedHealth acquired LHC Group, a home health provider with more than 900 locations. If UnitedHealth acquires Amedisys, it will own 10% of the home health market.
2. [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

14 [Justice Department sues to block UnitedHealth Group's \\$3.3 billion purchase of Amedisys](#)

The Minnesota Star Tribune; by The Associated Press; 11/12/24

The Justice Department is suing to block UnitedHealth Group's \$3.3 billion purchase of Amedisys, citing concerns the combination would hinder access to home health and hospice services in the U.S. The antitrust complaint was filed in Maryland federal court Tuesday. In a statement, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said the government is challenging UnitedHealth and Amedisys' proposed merger because "patients and their families experiencing some of the most difficult moments of their lives deserve affordable, high quality care options." The suit follows UnitedHealth's acquisition of LHC Group Inc., another home health and hospice provider. Since that transaction's completion last year, the Justice Department said, UnitedHealth and Amedisys have emerged as the two largest providers of home health and hospice care in the country. The department argues that eliminating competition between UnitedHealth and Amedisys "would harm patients who receive home health and hospice services, insurers



who contract for home health services, and nurses who provide home health and hospice services."

15 'Everything is lining up': Home-based care M&A expected to soar in near-term future

Home Health News; by Audrie Martin; 11/11/24

Home health, home care and hospice M&A was historically high in 2021, with high valuations serving sellers and solid return on investment serving buyers. Transactions plummeted after that, but recent signs suggest M&A is beginning to pick back up across sectors. ... Sellers should expect questions about employee retention, the company's track record of growth after M&A and whether their leadership has done due diligence before entering the race. ... Experts predict that large, founder-led home health and hospice businesses will be in high demand in the coming year. Larger home care companies, especially those that are Medicaid-funded, will also be in demand.

16 VITAS seeking large acquisitions in hospice CON states

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 11/13/24

As it considers potential acquisitions, VITAS Healthcare is focused on large assets in certificate of need (CON) states. VITAS is a subsidiary of Chemed Corp. (NYSE: CHE). The company this year made its return to the M&A market after a hiatus of several years. In April, VITAS acquired Covenant Health and Community Services' hospice operations as well as one assisted living facility in an \$85 million deal. With that transaction under its belt, more are likely on the way, according to Mike Witzeman, vice president and CFO for Chemed. "We are fairly optimistic on a pipeline of potential Covenant-size deals, but there are a few hurdles from an internal perspective that we would certainly want to keep in mind. First is we like CON states or states where there are restrictions on barriers of entry," Witzeman said during a presentation at the UBS Healthcare Conference. "The second would then be locations that, generally speaking, have some size to them. That's important, obviously, from a patient flow perspective,



but also from a staffing perspective.” The third major consideration is the price tag. The Covenant deal was sealed at a multiple of 6x to 8x EBITDA. ...

A. Mergers & Acquisitions

17 [Home health, home care companies gear up for acquisitions in 2025](#)

Modern Healthcare; by Diane Eastabrook; 11/18/24

Acquisitions in the home care industry are poised to take off in 2025, fueled by lower interest rates and President-elect Donald Trump's incoming administration. Large home care providers including Addus HomeCare, Aveanna Healthcare and the Pennant Group said during third quarter earnings calls they would aggressively look for deals next year to gain scale and better compete for hospital referrals.

18 [YoloCares: The case for independence](#)

The Davis Enterprise; by Craig Dresang; 11/17/24

I recently received an email from an individual in Temple Terrace, Fla., informing me that two Northern California nonprofit hospices — with close historical ties to YoloCares — have decided, via affiliation, to turn their keys over to a Florida-based health system that has had no previous presence in California.

Publisher's note: Craig Dresang, CEO of YoloCares, goes on to discuss questions and concerns with Chapters Health System's (Tampa, FL) acquisition of Hospice of East Bay (Pleasant Hill, CA), Hospice of Santa Cruz County (Scotts Valley, CA), Nathan Adelson Hospice (Las Vegas, NV), and Willamette Vital Health (Salem, OR). The original story - [Chapters Health System launches new Chapters Health West Division](#) - was announced 10/30/24.

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A4 Workforce Challenges

A. Paints the Picture

No articles featured in this category November 2024



B. Implications of the issue

19 **15 things to know about Gen Z workers**

Becker's Hospital Review; by Kristin Kuchno; 10/29/24

Each new generation entering the workforce tends to puzzle management, and members of Generation Z are no exception. Here are 15 things healthcare leaders should know about Gen Z:

1. Gen Z includes those born between 1997 and 2012, making the oldest Gen Zers 27 years old.
2. They are often focused on work-life balance ...
3. They are also flexible and expect change ...
4. For Columbia-based University of Missouri Health Care, it has been easiest to retain Gen Z employees in nursing roles.
5. For Boston Children's Hospital, corporate shared service functions like marketing and IT have a high retention of Gen Z workers.
6. "Wise feedback" works best for Gen Z, rather than something like a "compliment sandwich," ...
7. [Click on the title's link to continue reading this list]

20 **Providence, nurses union step up war of words as new Portland-area hospital strike looms**

The Lund Report; by Jake Thomas; 10/31/24

Providence is accusing the state's largest nurses union of "power flexing" after nurses at Providence St. Vincent signaled they are willing to strike in what could be another widespread work stoppage at the hospital system. The Oregon Nurses Association announced Thursday that 1,800 nurses at the hospital located in unincorporated Washington County, just west of Portland, gave union negotiators the green light to call for a strike. ... Nurses and allied health care workers at Providence's Portland and Seaside hospitals as well as its Home Health & Hospice service went on strike in June last year. Each of the three workplaces eventually reached contracts with Providence. But the new contracts had shorter timeframes than usual because of the strikes and are



set to expire on Dec. 31, 2024. All three began negotiations again with Providence management last month.

21 The health care job that's most in demand in each state, based on data

MSN; by Paxtyn Merten; 11/17/24

... The job? Home health and personal care aides. The U.S. expects to add close to a million jobs in this profession over the next decade. ... After COVID-19 devastated nursing homes, surveys have found fewer Americans are willing to live in them as they age. As a result, even more families may discover ways to use full-time or part-time in-home aides for end-of-life care. An analysis including more than 70 other health care jobs projected all but three states to add home health and personal care aides in the highest numbers. In just three states—Colorado, Florida, and South Dakota—did registered nurse job growth outpace home health. ... Medical Technology Schools identified the health care positions expected to add the most jobs in each state and Washington D.C. from 2020 to 2030, using Bureau of Labor Statistics data compiled by Projections Central. States are listed in alphabetical order, and the top three health care positions by the number of new jobs are provided. ...

Editor's note: [Click here for the US Department of Labor's "Projections Central" for state-specific data and projections.](#)

C. Solutions

22 Future-proofing healthcare: Upskilling the workforce to meet tomorrow's challenges

Healthcare Business Today; by Chris Trout; 11/4/24

A surgical technician recently told me, "We're constantly helping people." This simple yet powerful sentiment captures the essence of what healthcare workers ... focus on every day. However, the healthcare industry is undergoing profound changes that will shape its future over the next decade and beyond. These changes, driven by workforce shortages, AI and technological advancements, and shifting skill demands, have the potential to either enhance or burden healthcare systems. ... One of the most



significant forces driving change is the shortage of healthcare workers, especially in critical areas like nursing. ... The replacement cost for a nurse is estimated to be between \$40,000 and \$60,000, covering recruitment, temporary staffing and lost productivity. But these numbers don't account for the consequences of staffing shortages: diminished patient care, declining morale and increasing mental health challenges among overworked staff. Despite these challenges, healthcare organizations have a remarkable opportunity to develop talent, especially in entry-level and middle-skill roles. [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

23 [Virtual nursing results at 8 systems: 24 stats to know](#)

Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Paige Twenter; 11/4/24

Faced with a shortage of nurses, a rise in high-acuity cases and an increase in labor spend, hospitals and health systems have turned to virtual nursing programs for solutions. Here are 24 statistics tied to virtual nursing models, according to Becker's reporting:

- Advocate Health (Charlotte, N.C.): In late 2023, 12 of the organization's 68 hospitals employed virtual nurses who help with admissions and discharge or are available 24/7 to assist patients and caregivers. Between mid- and late 2023, the system's RN turnover rate improved by 60% and its nurse vacancy rate decreased by 46%.
- [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

24 [Balancing work, life and whatever is in between](#)

McKnights Senior Living; guest column by Rebekah Bray, LNHA; 11/11/24

Defining our work and lives as separate entities implies that one should not affect the other. For balance, opposing forces must be equal and not influence each other. In actuality, our careers and our home lives have been begrudgingly unifying for years. ... Late night and weekend hours somehow have become a badge of honor that demonstrates a commitment to the senior living community or long-term care facility, with the thinking that no one else will possibly be able to achieve it. Endless hours are not sustainable and, simultaneously, a baseline has been developed that tireless commitment is the bare minimum. ... [People] in leadership positions in healthcare



seldom are given the luxury to unplug, mentally or physically, due to the endless cycle of problems, including staffing, changes to regulations, revenue and day-to-day operations. Many leaders consider it a sacrifice that comes with the job of leadership.

...

Editor's note: Work-life balance continues to be a trend in reasons for retention, unionization, strikes, and more. More significantly--in the midst of your important work as leader--this is your life. This is your time to create and navigate relationships, work, and more. Tapping into your passion for end-of-life care, what will be your joys and regrets when you are receiving palliative and hospice care? What kinds of grief care will your family need after your death?

25 Carolina Caring celebrates fourth graduating class of CNA Training and Job Placement Program

Focus, Newton, NC; 11/13/24

On the evening of Thursday, October 24th, Carolina Caring recognized the seven graduates of its latest Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) Training and Job Placement Program. ... This state-approved CNA Training Program runs for eight weeks at Carolina Caring's Newton campus on 3975 Robinson Road. Led by licensed nursing instructors, these courses provide expert hands-on education which prepares students to pass the intensive North Carolina Nurse Aide certification exam. Students receive financial aid throughout the program, and all graduates who successfully complete their certifications are offered positions with Carolina Caring. ... "Carolina Caring blessed me by selecting me for this program and providing me with an opportunity that I otherwise would not have been able to financially invest in at this current moment," said Allison Ackley, class valedictorian. "They poured into me, and so I'm going to be pouring back into them."

Editor's note from [Carolina Caring's website](#): "In 1979, Carolina Caring was established as one of North Carolina's original three hospice providers. We were a small group of grassroots volunteers with a mission: to help our parents, grandparents and neighbors



walk through their final moments with dignity and respect." We congratulate you on this innovative, mission-driven educational and staffing initiative.

26 Grant helps launch paramedicine program for patients in need

Westfair Business Journal, Sleepy Hollow, NY; by Westfair Online; 11/15/24

Northwell Phelps Hospital received a \$125,000 grant from the Phelps Community Foundation to help launch the Westchester Community Paramedicine Program. ... They will utilize remote physiological monitoring to track blood pressure, oxygen saturation and cardiac rhythms, providing convenient and cost-effective care compared to emergency room visits. "This program is designed to address the gap in access to primary and nonemergency medical care for vulnerable populations," said Barry Geller, M.D., chair of the emergency department and associate medical director at Phelps Hospital. ... The initiative will first focus on patients served by Phelps' palliative care, geriatric and emergency medicine programs with plans to expand service to cancer patients. It is expected to reach approximately 200 individuals during the first year, ...

Total	8
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A5 Patient, Family, and Future Customer Demographics and Trends

27 Leading causes of death in the US, 2019-2023

JAMA Network; by Farida B. Ahmad, Jodi A. Cisewski, Robert N. Anderson; 8/8/24

The annual mortality burden, the causes of mortality, and the changes over time are key indicators of population change. In the US, mortality statistics are derived from death certificate data from the National Center for Health Statistics National Vital Statistics System. These data provide both the annual mortality burden in numbers and by cause of death. Herein, we summarize the key findings from the newly released report from the National Center for Health Statistics on the leading causes of death in the US from 2019 to 2023. *[Top 10 leading causes of death in 2023, which are trended over the past five years, include: heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries / COVID-19, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, Alzheimer disease, diabetes, kidney disease, influenza and pneumonia, and suicide.]*



28 "I'm 68 and totally alone": 50 people share what it's like being seniors

AOL.com - Bored Panda; by Dominyka; 11/9/24

People are different in their upbringing, in their tastes, even in their looks. But all people do have one thing in common: we're all heading towards the same end. With the exception of Bryan Johnson, maybe. Still, we're all aging, whether we like it or not. And with aging comes social isolation; according to a 2024 Medicare report, 57% of adults aged 65 and older report feeling lonely. The users of Quora recently tackled this problem when one person wrote: "I'm 63 years old and so lonely. Does it matter to anyone?" Many older people rushed to the comments to share their stories, highlighting the sad realities they face today. Bored Panda sought the expertise of the anti-ageism activist Jacynth Bassett, Founder and CEO of Ageism Is Never In Style about how important social connections are to us as we age. We also spoke with her about the right terminology when referring to older people and how we can all spot ageist attitudes in ourselves.

29 Long-term care market to grow by USD 394.8 billion from 2024-2028, as aging population drives demand with AI impact on market trends - Technavio

Cision; by PR Newswire; 11/8/24

Report on how AI is redefining market landscape - The global long-term care (LTC) market size is estimated to grow by USD 394.8 billion from 2024-2028, according to Technavio. The market is estimated to grow at a CAGR of over 3.21% during the forecast period. Growing demand for long-term care from aging population is driving market growth, with a trend towards expansion and growth of several healthcare domain. However, lack of skilled nursing staff for long-term care poses a challenge. Key market players include Abri Health Care Services LLC, Amedisys Inc., Brookdale Senior Living Inc., CareOne Management LLC, Diversicare Healthcare Services Inc., Extencicare Canada Inc, FCP Live In, Genesis Healthcare Inc., Honor Technology Inc., Illumifin Corp., Kindred Health Holdings LLC, Life Care Centers of America Inc., Revera



Inc., SeniorLiving.org, Sonida Senior Living Inc., Sunrise Senior Living LLC, and Wickshire Senior Living.

30 Older Americans living alone often rely on neighbors or others willing to help

California Healthline; by Judith Graham; 11/12/24

Donald Hammen, 80, and his longtime next-door neighbor in south Minneapolis, Julie McMahon, have an understanding. Every morning, she checks to see whether he’s raised the blinds in his dining room window. If not, she’ll call Hammen or let herself into his house to see what’s going on. Should McMahon find Hammen in a bad way, she plans to contact his sister-in-law, who lives in a suburb of Des Moines. That’s his closest relative. Hammen never married or had children, and his younger brother died in 2022. Although Hammen lives alone, a web of relationships binds him to his city and his community — neighbors, friends, former co-workers, fellow volunteers with an advocacy group for seniors, and fellow members of a group of solo agers. ... American society rests on an assumption that families take care of their own. But 15 million Americans 50 and older didn’t have any close family — spouses, partners, or children — in 2015, the latest year for which reliable estimates are available. Most lived alone. By 2060, that number is expected to swell to 21 million. ... [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

Editor's note: This important article references (1) "a noteworthy study published by researchers at Emory University" titled "Solo but not alone," which we will include in a Saturday research issue and (2) an AAPR survey that gives the name "solo agers." I give a shout-out to the visionary "Living Alone Program" back in 1993 at Hospice of Louisville (now Hosparus), and to all hospices who deliver creative, quality care to people who live alone.

31 Older Americans living alone often rely on neighbors or others willing to help

California Healthline; by Judith Graham; 11/12/24

Donald Hammen, 80, and his longtime next-door neighbor in south Minneapolis, Julie



McMahon, have an understanding. Every morning, she checks to see whether he’s raised the blinds in his dining room window. If not, she’ll call Hammen or let herself into his house to see what’s going on. Should McMahon find Hammen in a bad way, she plans to contact his sister-in-law, who lives in a suburb of Des Moines. That’s his closest relative. Hammen never married or had children, and his younger brother died in 2022. Although Hammen lives alone, a web of relationships binds him to his city and his community — neighbors, friends, former co-workers, fellow volunteers with an advocacy group for seniors, and fellow members of a group of solo agers. ... American society rests on an assumption that families take care of their own. But 15 million Americans 50 and older didn’t have any close family — spouses, partners, or children — in 2015, the latest year for which reliable estimates are available. Most lived alone. By 2060, that number is expected to swell to 21 million. ... [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

Editor's note: This important article references (1) "a noteworthy study published by researchers at Emory University" titled "Solo but not alone," which we will include in a Saturday research issue and (2) an AAPR survey that gives the name "solo agers." I give a shout-out to the visionary "Living Alone Program" back in 1993 at Hospice of Louisville (now Hosparus), and to all hospices who deliver creative, quality care to people who live alone.

	Total	5
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A6 Regulatory and Political

32 [Longer hospice stays among dementia patients save Medicare dollars](#)

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 11/4/24

Hospice utilization has tripled among patients diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) during the past two decades. The trend has ignited concerns about these patients’ lengths of stay, as well as praise for hospices’ cost-savings potential. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) researchers analyzed Medicare fee-for-service claims spanning between 1999 and 2019, including data on hospice billing, patient enrollment, hospitalizations, health costs and chronic condition



indicators. Roughly 14.7% of ADRD patients utilized hospices services in 2019, nearly triple the 4.4% of patients who received this care in 1999, according to the research, which was published in the National Bureau of Economic Research. The research compared billing claims among nonprofit and for-profit providers to explore spending associated with longer hospice stays among dementia patients. ...

33 [Seven of thirty hospices reviewed did not comply or may not have complied with terms and conditions and federal requirements for Provider Relief Fund payments](#)

HHS Office of Inspector General; issued on 11/8/24, posted on 11/14/24

Why OIG Did This Audit: The Provider Relief Fund (PRF), a \$178 billion program, provided funds to eligible providers for health care-related expenses or lost revenue attributable to COVID-19. ... This audit is part of a series reviewing PRF payments to various provider types. Specifically, this audit assessed whether 30 selected hospices expended taxpayer funds in accordance with Federal and program requirements. ... What OIG Found: ... Of the 30 selected hospices, 23 hospices used PRF funds for allowable expenditures and lost revenues attributable to COVID-19; however, 7 hospices did not comply with or may not have complied with Federal requirements. Of these seven hospices, which received \$98.1 million in PRF payments, six hospices claimed a total of \$8.3 million of unallowable PRF expenditures and inaccurately reported \$1.5 million of lost revenues, and one hospice claimed \$4 million in expenditures that may not have been allowable. ...

What OIG Recommends: We made two recommendations to HRSA, including that it require the selected hospices to return any unallowable expenditures to the Federal Government or ensure that the hospices properly account for these expenditures. ...

34 [Hospices leaders: 'Vigilant' compliance pivotal in MAC auditing climate](#)

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 11/18/24

e auditing environment has heated up in the hospice industry, with inconsistencies reportedly proliferating among the various types of regulatory enforcement activity — particularly those performed by Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs). The issue has some hospice providers delving deeper into a range of compliance strategies. ... Hospices in recent years have seen a plethora of auditing types picking up steam in frequency, including MACs, Targeted Probe and Education (TPE), Supplemental Medical Review Contractors (SMRC), Unified Program Integrity Contractors (UPIC) and Recovery



Audit Contractors (RAC). A main purpose of most audit types is to identify hospice providers with frequent errors on their billing claims or other activity that the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) considers to be unusual.

35 The Alliance applauds Gerald’s Law passing through Congress

National Alliance for Care at Home (the Alliance; formerly NAHC and NHPCO); Press Release; 11/19/24

The National Alliance for Care at Home (the Alliance) celebrates the historic passage of H.R. 8371, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act in the U.S. House of Representatives last night with a bipartisan vote of 389-9. This landmark legislation includes Section 301, Gerald’s Law, which addresses a critical gap in benefits impacting seriously-ill veterans and their families receiving hospice care. The story of Gerald “Jerry” Elliott, a U. S. Army veteran, underscores the importance of this legislative achievement. Diagnosed with cancer, Jerry was admitted to his local Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital in 2019 before transitioning to VA hospice care at home to be surrounded by his family. After his passing, his family discovered they were ineligible for full burial and funeral financial support because Jerry died outside of a VA facility.

Total	4
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A7 Technology and Innovations

36 [\[Nebraska Department of Correctional Services\] NDCS launches hospice care volunteer program](#)

News 2 North Platte, NE; 11/4/24

A new program is aiming to bring transformative change to end-of-life care in Nebraska correctional facilities. The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services recently launched a hospice care volunteer program to ensure terminally ill patients are not alone in their final moments. The first cohort of 16 volunteers selected from the Reception and Treatment Center completed 10 weekly trainings, delivered by healthcare



professionals. The trainings covered various aspects of hospice care, including communication skills with patients and families, confidentiality, end-of-life care and stress management. In the program, volunteers work with NDCS team members and healthcare providers a few hours each day to address the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of incarcerated individuals who have a terminal diagnosis. This will allow them to maintain employment within the facility and participate in programming, NDCS said.

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A8 Speed of Change, Resiliency, and Re-Culture

37 [Your overall leadership success comes down to 2 simple strategies, say experts: These strategies should be top of your mind as you plan ahead for 2025.](#)

Inc.; by Marcel Schwantes; 11/5/24

In 2001, Anne Mulcahy suddenly found herself in charge at Xerox as its CEO right when the company was going through a major financial crisis. In previous interviews, she mentioned that one of the first things she did was pick up the phone and call Warren Buffett for advice. Buffett, the CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, told Mulcahy: "Focus on your customers, and lead your people like their lives depend on your success." Buffett's advice was exactly what helped Xerox pull through. The first part of this two-part strategy—focusing on customers—was key. Mulcahy often quotes Xerox founder Joe Wilson, who said, "Customers decide whether we have jobs or not. Their attitude is what makes or breaks us." But the second part of Buffett's advice often doesn't get enough attention. Regarding good leadership, taking care of your employees first is the best way to win over your customers. Happy employees lead to happy customers.

1. Build Up Your People-Leader Pipeline ...
2. Focus on Career Paths for Employees ...

38 [Why Judy Faulkner believes in 'yin-yang' leadership](#)

Becker's Health IT; by Giles Bruce; 11/4/24

Epic founder and CEO Judy Faulkner says effective leadership teams typically consist of people who balance each other out. She pointed to the definition of "yin and yang" as "complementary and at the same time opposing forces that interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than the assembled parts and the parts are important for cohesion of the whole," she wrote in a Nov. 4 blog post. Ms. Faulkner has



often noticed that two people in leadership roles have great success together because they're so different.

39 Embracing the 'soft front, strong back' leadership style

People Management; by Gaia van der Esch; 11/15/24

This method empowers leaders to take bold decisions, but also to be grounded in principles and inspire others to do the same, says Gaia van der Esch. What do you think of when asked to imagine a leader? Probably your big boss, someone decisive, authoritative, comfortable with power and hierarchy, competitive and with a strong track record of delivering results. However, from my experience managing teams and being managed by others, I know how difficult it is to find a boss who is also a good leader. By 'good leader,' I mean someone who knows how to share power and responsibilities, who values trust, respect and the wellbeing of employees. Someone who possesses clear values that underpin their leadership decisions and ground them when leading by example. Someone who knows how to inspire others and dedicate time to helping employees reach their full potential, ultimately transforming them into leaders. And, most of all, a good leader should possess emotional intelligence: being empathetic, listening to and being ready to learn from everyone – no matter their role, not fearing showing doubt or vulnerability in their team and being bold in encouraging others to do the same.

40 3 clear signs to quickly identify someone with good leadership skills: Good leadership in the business world extends beyond hitting targets, increasing revenue, and achieving status.

Inc., by Marcel Schwantes; 11/20/24

If you've ever had the chance to work under a good leader, you've probably noticed something important: They actually care about their people. They're not just focused on hitting targets or climbing the ladder themselves, they genuinely care about helping their team succeed, both in their current roles and in their long-term goals. For many leaders, this doesn't come naturally. It's tough to balance caring for others when you're



under pressure to deliver results and meet expectations. But here’s the thing: Research—and countless stories from top leaders I have interviewed on my podcast—shows that focusing on your people is a game-changer for the success of your business. It’s not just a feel-good approach; it’s smart strategy. ... When leaders consistently show they care and foster the right environment, the positive ripple effects are undeniable. Let’s talk about three clear signs that will tell you someone is fit for leadership:

1. They lead with transparency. ...
2. They boost psychological safety in teams. ...
3. They treat employees with dignity and respect. ...

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A9 The Human Factor

41 [Pursuit of quick profits makes hospice care worse, new research says](#)

Ohio Capital Journal; by Marty Schladen; 11/20/24

Private equity firms — high-dollar investors known for aggressively seeking profit — and publicly traded health conglomerates have been buying up businesses that provide hospice care. But when it comes to caring for patients facing the end of their lives, those businesses perform worst, according to a [research letter](#) published Monday in the Journal of the American Medical Association. ... Publicly traded behemoths such as UnitedHealth Group and CVS Health are already the subject of investigations and [lawsuits](#) by federal and state government over allegedly anticompetitive actions as drug middlemen. At the same time, both provide hospice care. Meanwhile, the business practices of private equity groups have been coming under increasing scrutiny over the past decade. They often buy businesses in deals structured so they can quickly recoup their investment, identify the most profitable assets, sell them and then sell the resulting business or declare bankruptcy. ... The firms also have been accused of being predatory toward consumers.

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A10 Highlighted Articles of Interest

42 [Dying or lying? For-profit hospices and end of life care](#)

American Economic Review; by Jonathan Gruber, David H. Howard, Jetson Leder-Luis, Theodore L. Caputi; 10/24

The Medicare hospice program is intended to provide palliative care to terminal patients, but patients with long stays in hospice are highly profitable, motivating concerns about overuse among the Alzheimer's and Dementia (ADRD) population in the rapidly growing for-profit sector. We provide the first causal estimates of the effect of for-profit hospice on patient spending using the entry of for-profit hospices over twenty years. We find hospice has saved money for Medicare by offsetting other expensive care among ADRD patients. As a result, policies limiting hospice use including revenue caps and anti-fraud lawsuits are distortionary and deter potentially cost-saving admissions.

43 [Why home health deserts are spreading across rural states](#)

Modern Healthcare; by Diane Eastabrook; 11/1/24

Home health deserts are increasing at an alarming rate across some rural states as home health companies close or reduce services due to financial challenges. Home health companies in Maine, Nebraska and Minnesota say a proposed Medicare rate cut, low Medicare Advantage reimbursements and workforce shortages are forcing them to make difficult business decisions — leaving many communities with limited access or no access to post-acute care in the home. ... Approximately 800 home health providers have closed over the past five years, according to the National Alliance for Care at Home, a trade group that represents the industry. Alliance CEO Dr. Steve Landers mostly blames a Medicare home health payment model that went into effect in 2020 for reducing Medicare reimbursements and causing financial stress for providers. "While closures are significant, we are also getting reports that providers are restricting the territory they serve as a first step to addressing their financial stresses," Landers said in an email. "This appears to be especially concerning in rural areas where no other provider is available to step in."

44 [With the rise of AI, is a Chief Automation Officer necessary?](#)

HR Daily Advisor Newsletter - Technology; by Lou Bachenheimer; 11/11/24

In the age of digital transformation and advanced technology like AI, automation is a critical element for organizations to stay competitive. That's why many C-suites are considering incorporating a Chief Automation Officer (CAO) into the fabric of their



organization to provide senior executive oversight of automation initiatives. But is a whole new role in the c-suite needed and necessary to successfully implement AI and automation into your organization? ... Instead of pouring new resources and energy into new roles that are created off the back of hype, what is needed is executive sponsorship and leadership of advanced automation programs at the highest and most influential levels, underpinned by the appropriate business knowledge and network to be able to drive real change.

- Automation is Everyone's Job ...
- The Benefits of Automation at Scale ...
- Building the "E-Suite" with the Right Set of Skills ...

45 **Palliative care, ACO collaborations fuel 'historical savings' in MSSP Program**

Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 11/11/24

Palliative care providers that form collaborative partnerships with Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) may be lending to a landmark downward trend in health care spending in the value-based payment landscape. The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced that its Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) yielded more than \$2.1 billion net savings in 2023 — the largest amount in the program's inception more than a decade ago, according to the agency. ACOs participating in MSSP earned an estimated \$3.1 billion in shared savings payments during the program's 2022 to 2023 performance year, the highest dollar amount thus far, CMS reported. [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

46 **Navigating the aftermath of natural disasters**

Teleios Collaborative Network (TCN); by Lara McKinnis; 11/15/24

This morning I woke up to two bears outside, a little cub sitting on our front steps eating the pumpkin that my daughter recently carved, the mom nearby completely sprawled out lounging in the sun in a bed of freshly fallen yellow and orange oak



leaves. This is the "fall" that I look forward to every year in Asheville. I wanted to hold onto this feeling, all of us standing at our screened-in window talking to the bears as if they understood us, our dog enthusiastically joining in the conversation. This feeling is alive and vibrant; however, so is the visceral awareness of the horrific despair that has engulfed my beloved community and so many communities in Western North Carolina. ... Adjusting to a natural disaster is nuanced and layered. [Click on the title's link to continue reading this hospice leader's reflections and professional guidance.]

Editor's note: We thank Lara McKinnis for raising our awareness to what matters most-- large and small. We alert you to the needs of hospice and other healthcare needs as the Associated Press reports ["Wildfire threat continues in much of the US Northeast as dry conditions persist."](#)

47 For-profit hospices increasing despite poor performance

EurekaAlert!, Weill Cornell Medicine; Peer-reviewed publication; 11/18/24

Hospices are increasingly owned by private equity firms and publicly traded companies, but recently Weill Cornell Medicine researchers found that they performed substantially worse than hospices owned by not-for-profit agencies. This is concerning as nearly 75% of hospice programs, which care for patients in their last stage of life, are for-profit. The study, published Nov. 18 in *JAMA*, highlights the need for policy interventions that focus on increasing transparency and accountability in hospice ownership. ... The researchers analyzed Consumer Assessment of Health Care Providers and Systems (CAHPS) data from January 2021 through December 2022. CAHPS, the national standard for assessing the quality of patient care, surveyed the caregivers of those who passed away in hospice by telephone and mail. The researchers compared measures for communication, timely care, treating family members with respect, emotional and religious support, help for symptoms, hospice care training, hospice rating and willingness to recommend. ... Of the 2,676 hospices included in the final analysis, approximately 25% were owned by private equity and publicly traded companies and 40% were other types of privately owned for-profit hospices. Though only 25% of the



hospices surveyed were not-for-profit, they provided the highest-rated quality care including focus on managing pain, comfort, dignity and quality of life.

	Total	6
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