

From: Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter
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Sent: Sunday, December 10, 2023 4:00 AM
To: cordtkassner@gmail.com
Subject: Your Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter for 12/10/23



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December 10th, 2023

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Headlines

[New Jersey Passes Community-Based Palliative Care Medicaid Bill](#)

Palliative Care News

December 8, 2023

A New Jersey state bill recently passed that establishes community-based palliative care benefits under Medicaid. The new legislation includes coverage for specialized medical care, emotional and spiritual support, as well as pain and symptom relief for Medicaid beneficiaries with advanced illnesses, including both adult and pediatric populations.

[Oxford's 2023 Word of the Year Is...](#)

New York Times, 12/9/23

"Rizz" - the Gen Z slang term for "charisma". Sorry Swifties, not this year!

[What It's Like Watching My Friends Die in Prison](#)

By Martez Johnson

Vera

December 7, 2023

I work in hospice at a maximum-security prison. The question I get the most is, "How can you do that?" Honestly, it's not easy. We are literally sitting with death. Hospice is a program that we sign up for, where we sit with another prisoner while he dies. That's not all we do; there's far more to it than that. But for now, that's what I'll say. When someone who is sick and has signed a "do not resuscitate" order gets to the point of no return, they call us in. I or one of my comrades sit with them while they die. When I started hospice, I didn't really know what it meant. I understood how to do the job itself, but I didn't really understand its gravity in full. The toll it takes on you. How mental it is. How much love it takes. How much forgiveness you have to give to the man who's dying in front of you, even when it's not yours to give. How much it makes you want forgiveness for your past actions. I go into each room knowing that death is on the other side of that door. By the time I show up, there's no more hope. Can you imagine being in prison without any hope? I don't think it's right for any human to die in prison, but I've seen it so many times. I walk with death. I sit with death. ... So, to answer that question I get most: I do this because my friends need me to.

[Editor's Note: an advocate for prison reform, a writer, a hospice volunteer, and a mentor.]



**HOSPICE
ANALYTICS**

Hospice Provider News

[Teleios Collaborative Network Announces Teleios University Graduates](#)

News Release

December 7, 2023

Hendersonville, NC—Teleios Collaborative Network announced its 2023 Teleios University graduates. Eleven individuals successfully completed the year-long program, earning their certificates in leadership excellence. TU's Leadership Excellence program is unlike any other. This one-year course is provided through monthly webinars, experiential monthly activities, quarterly challenges and more. It culminates with a capstone project and earns each participant who completes the assignments a certification in leadership excellence. This year's graduates include the following leaders in the Hospice and Serious Illness Sector:

- Alethea Bivens, Senior Director of Hospice Clinical Operations, Four Seasons
- Angie Barker, Executive Assistant, Ancora Compassionate Care
- Annette Kiser, Chief Compliance Officer, Teleios Collaborative Network
- Beth Thomas, Support Services Manager, Tillery Compassionate Care
- Celeste Eld, Executive Director, Hospice of Eastern Idaho
- Heather Halford, Director of Billing Shared Services, Teleios Collaborative Network
- Heidi Clemmer, Director of Marketing, Four Seasons
- Jamel Fayson, Director of Finance Operations, Teleios Collaborative Network
- Kristie Szarpa, Senior Vice President of Practice Management, Mountain Valley
- Molly Behan, Director of Growth, Four Seasons
- Rikki Hooper, Chief Clinical Operations Officer, Four Seasons

[Sandpiper Scottsdale donates \\$4,000 in food for hospice patients](#)

Daily Independent (Phoenix, AZ)

December 8, 2023

Scottsdale, AZ—For the second year in a row, Sandpiper Scottsdale held a holiday food drive to benefit Hospice of the Valley patients and families in need. The community donated \$4,000 in nonperishable food, along with \$200 for extra groceries.

[Future of LCHD-Hospice uncertain](#)

Daily Gate City (Keokuk, IA)

December 8, 2023

Keokuk, IA—Lee County Supervisor Chairman Garry Seyb is prepared for a lengthy workshop following the supervisors' regular meeting Monday as officials look at the possible discontinuation of the Lee County Health Department's hospice program. "It's an emotional issue. It provides a needed, respectable service as far as I know," Seyb told The Daily Democrat on Friday. "With that being said, we are looking at everything, not just the health department."



[How Health Equity Payment Models Are Impacting Hospice Staff Diversity](#)

Hospice News

December 8, 2023

Recent health equity initiatives in hospice reimbursement may reverberate impacts into providers' staff recruitment and retention strategies, particularly when it comes to leadership roles. ... While equity-focused reimbursement channels like ACO REACH hold promise in helping to reduce disparities, unknowns exist around how providers should shape their care delivery approaches and where to pour operational and financial resources, according to Hospice of Acadiana CEO Keith Everett. ... A key for hospices to understand about health equity payment programs is that strategies to improve disparities can come in a variety of ways, which can be both a challenge and opportunity for providers, Everett said. ... One area of focus is to grow a more diverse employee base—not just in terms of interdisciplinary staff who interact with patients and families, but also among leadership teams, according to André Lee, co-founder and administrator of Heart 'n Soul Hospice. ... Community collaborations are key to knowing where to search for hospice professionals from diverse backgrounds, according to Agrace Hospice & Supportive Care CEO Lynne Sexten.

Clinical News

[St. Peter's Hospice celebrates its 30th annual "Light a Life" fundraiser](#)

KTVH-TV (Helena, MT)

December 8, 2023

Helena, MT—On Thursday, December 7, the St. Peter's Health Foundation celebrated its 30th annual "Light a Life" event.

[Severna Park Teens Fold Hope Into Gifts For Hospice Patients](#)

Severna Park [MD] Voice

December 8, 2023

... Kateri Jarvis and Hannah Kim hope classmates will help them make hundreds of origami cranes to give to Hospice of the Chesapeake patients. Inspired by the Wishing Crane Project, a nonprofit organization started by high schoolers in Arizona, the Severna Park High School juniors worked through the summer to start a chapter at their school.

[Finding purpose in the journey—Hospice volunteer shares joy of finding life again](#)

West Plains (MO) Daily Quill

December 8, 2023

West Plains, MO—For Kay “Katie” Dowler, volunteering one day a week at Ozarks Healthcare At Home: Hospice has become her way of giving and finding a renewed sense of purpose. The journey with Ozarks Healthcare At Home: Hospice has come full circle, from being patient’s partner to a grateful volunteer.

Public Policy News

[COVID vaccination rates ‘alarmingly’ low among nursing home staff, CDC says—‘A real danger’](#)

FOX News

December 7, 2023

Despite the higher risk that the coronavirus poses to older adults, a surprisingly low share of nursing home staff and residents are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. Only six states are indicating that over 10% of staff members are updated on their vaccines, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Top Lawmakers for Hospices to Watch in 2024](#)

Hospice News

December 8, 2023

Hospice providers will be looking to Congress in 2024 to address issues related to program integrity, quality improvement and industry-wide workforce pressures. As legislative efforts develop, hospices may want to focus their attention on a few key legislators. ...

Notable Mentions: Rep. Beth Van Duyne, (R-Texas), Rep. Earl Blumenaur, (D-Oregon), Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-California), Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-California), Sen. John Barasso (R-Wyoming), Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin), and Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-West Virginia).

M&A News

[National HME Acquires Hospice Source](#)

Hospice News

December 8, 2023

The durable medical equipment provider National HME has acquired Hospice Source, also a DME company. The transaction beefs up National HME’s footprint, which currently includes more than 50 locations nationwide.

Post-Acute Care News

[MedPAC Advises Cutting Skilled Nursing Medicare Payment Rate by 3%](#)

Skilled Nursing News

December 8, 2023

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission is recommending that for fiscal year 2025, Congress should reduce the 2024 Medicare-based payment rates for skilled nursing facilities by 3%, citing strong margin projections, occupancy growth and access to capital for the sector.

[Brookdale Reports November 2023 Occupancy](#)

PRNewswire

December 8, 2023

Nashville, TN—Brookdale Senior Living Inc. reported today its consolidated occupancy for November 2023. November 2023 weighted average occupancy increased 140 basis points year-over-year to 78.4%. Achieved twenty-five consecutive months of year-over-year weighted average occupancy growth.

[Study—Black Patients Less Likely Receive A Home Health Referral Following A Hospital Stint](#)

Home Health Care News

December 8, 2023

Home health services are a vital component of care continuity. But nurses are less likely to give Black patients, compared to white patients, home health referrals when being discharged from a hospital stay, a new University of Michigan study found. Specifically, researchers found that roughly 22% of Black patients were receiving home health referrals by discharge nurses, compared to 27% of white patients.

General News

[As deficit estimate hits \\$68 billion, Newsom seeks 'major changes' to healthcare wage law](#)

Los Angeles Times

December 7, 2023

With California facing an expected \$68-billion budget deficit, Gov. Gavin Newsom is seeking "major reforms" to pull funding from a costly plan next year to begin raising the statewide minimum wage for healthcare workers to \$25 an hour. ... It's unclear whether Newsom is suggesting he would like to narrow the higher minimum wage to fewer workers, or whether he's seeking to delay or pause implementation of the increase.

[Oxford's 2023 Word of the Year Is...](#)

New York Times, 12/9/23

"Rizz" - the Gen Z slang term for "charisma". Sorry Swifties, not this year!

Other

Hospice Staff Promotions and Additions Announced This Week

- After more than 13 years with AMOREM (Lenoir, NC), Vice President of Finance Terry Johnson is retiring. Airnoi “Noy” Xaysanavongphet, a Burke County native, has been named AMOREM’s new chief finance officer. Xaysanavongphet comes to AMOREM with more than 20 years of experience in the financial and accounting industry. ([News Herald](#), Morganton, NC)
- Coastal Home Health & Hospice recently announced the addition of Dr. Palak Patel as the new medical director. This appointment comes following the retirement of Dr. Silver, who has dedicated 29 of service to Coastal Home Health & Hospice. ([Del Norte Triplicate](#), Crescent City, CA)
- Agape Care Group announced today that it is appointing Kari Bradford, DNP, to serve as the company’s palliative medical director. Bradford is an advanced certified hospice and palliative care nurse practitioner and an active member of both the Hospice and Palliative Nurse Association and the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. ([Business Wire](#))

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