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December 19th, 2023

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Headlines

[Washington Post Reports Highlight Assisted Living Resident Elopements and Staffing Problems, Industry Pushes Back](#)

Senior Housing News

December 17, 2023

A new *Washington Post* investigation has detailed dozens of incidents where senior living residents have wandered away and died as well as “bare-bones” staffing levels at communities across the country. In one article published over the weekend, the Post examined thousands of cases since 2018 where senior living residents wandered away from their communities, resulting in nearly 100 deaths in that time. ... The articles underscore the challenges senior living operators will surely have in the coming years, in terms of both staffing and managing communities and maintaining positive perceptions among the public.

Hospice Provider News

[Halfacre Construction Company Celebrates Groundbreaking for Gulfside Hospice](#)

SRQ Magazine (Sarasota, FL)

December 18, 2023

New Port Richey, FL—Halfacre Construction Company, a Lakewood Ranch-based commercial construction company, recently broke ground on Gulfside Hospice, a non-profit organization offering hospice, skilled home health care and palliative care for serious, chronic and late stage illnesses. Located at 5299 Deer Park Drive in New Port Richey, the \$11 million project includes a single-story hospice facility that has 24 private beds, new sitework, parking and landscaping.

[Mary Washington Hospice’s 6th annual Light Up a Life raises more than \\$34,000](#)

Free Lance-Star (Fredericksburg, VA)

December 17, 2023

Fredericksburg, VA—Mary Washington Hospice hosted its sixth annual Light Up a Life Illumination event on Nov. 9. This special event allowed community members to purchase luminaria in their loved ones’ memory. ... Proceeds from Light Up a Life benefit Mary Washington Hospice, Grief Support Services and Mary Washington Hospital Auxiliary. ... “This year, Light Up a Life raised more than \$34,000 to support these vital programs,” says Amy Hoffman, director of Mary Washington Hospice.



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Clinical News

[How one woman is honoring her late husband's memory with a grief program at Sargento](#)

Sheboygan (WI) Press

December 17, 2023

Plymouth, WI—Shirley Krause and her husband Randy Susen were inseparable for 30 years. ... Susen passed away July 4, 2020, at age 64, nearly a year after going to the ICU for the brain injury. ... Krause, a supply chain technology principal at Sargento, launched a life planning series in July focused on a grief and end-of-life planning for employees, one of several efforts she's pursuing to honor her husband's memory, along with hosting a widows' support group, advocating for nursing home residents' rights and supporting other families with traumatic brain injury survivors.

[Carver Middle School students show compassion, support for hospice patients](#)

Laurinburg (NC) Exchange

December 15, 2023

Laurinburg, NC—December is usually a short month for Scotland County Schools due to the holiday break. However, several students at Carver Middle School have gone above and beyond with their time and efforts. Two school organizations, the Blue Blazers and Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E) have embraced the true spirit of the season by supporting Scotland Regional Hospice through their respective community service campaigns.

[Federal agency quashes Georgia's plan to let pharmacies sell medical marijuana](#)

Associated Press/Washington Post

December 17, 2023

Atlanta, GA—Federal drug officials are warning Georgia to shelve its plans to be the first state to allow pharmacies to dispense medical marijuana products. News outlets report that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration on Nov. 27 warned pharmacies that dispensing medical marijuana violates federal law.



TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

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[Anderson Cooper's Newest Assignment—Grief \(His Own\)](#)

New York Times

December 17, 2023

It took Anderson Cooper more than a year after his mother's death to begin clearing out

her apartment. It was an emotionally draining task, one that he put off—something his mother may have anticipated, because she left him a road map. He began finding notes she had left him, tucked away in drawers and sealed containers. Written in her hand on heavy stationery, they acted as a kind of treasure hunt to their shared grief. Mr. Cooper's mother, the heiress and fashion designer Gloria Vanderbilt, was one of the most famous women in the world, courted by Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando, photographed by Richard Avedon, and a muse to Truman Capote. ... Just sorting through her personal papers would have been challenging for her son after her death at the age of 95 in 2019. But the apartment was also the final resting place of objects that belonged to Mr. Cooper's father, Wyatt Emory Cooper, an author and screenwriter who died in 1978 when Anderson was 10, and his older brother, Carter Cooper, who died in 1988, when they were both in their 20s, after jumping from his mother's balcony.... Mr. Cooper, 56, began keeping voice memos on his phone as he was sorting through his mother's belongings in 2021. They grew into a podcast on grief, "All There Is With Anderson Cooper," which began its second season in November. For decades, the longtime anchor of CNN's "Anderson Cooper 360°" has chronicled other people's suffering. Now, he has become a correspondent from the land of his own grief.

[Grieving amid holidays is hard. Hospice can help](#)

Times Union (Albany, NY)

December 16, 2023

The holidays can be challenging, more so for those dealing with the loss of a loved one. ... "We have lots of experience dealing with death and grieving," said Angela Yu, manager of marketing and communications, continuing care at St. Peter's Health Partners. She said the hospice has also developed Holiday Hope videos on how to cope. They are posted on Facebook.

Public Policy News

[Terminally ill N.Y.ers deserve a peaceful death](#)

By Jules Netherland, PhD

New York Daily News

December 17, 2023

At the height of the 2019 holiday season—on Christmas Eve—I received news no one wants to hear. My oncologist informed me that the lump I had found in my right breast was Stage 3 cancer, which had spread into the surrounding lymph nodes. *[Click on the link above to read this author's personal story.]* Enough is enough, Albany. All we're asking for is the option to make an informed and deeply personal decision. Show me and all New Yorkers some love and let us have the option of a peaceful death on our own terms. Pass the Medical Aid in Dying Act now.

[Assisted-suicide bills in Mass. present risks to patients, public](#)

By Madelyn Hicks, MD

Worcester (MA) Telegram & Gazette

December 17, 2023

The Massachusetts Legislature's Committee on Public Health is considering two bills that would legalize physician-assisted suicide in the commonwealth. As a Massachusetts physician, as a psychiatrist who treats persons with mental health problems, and as a daughter who has dealt with the loss of a parent to a debilitating illness, I am concerned by flaws in these bills that present risks to individual patients and the public. Trust in the health care system would likely be damaged for many, but especially for communities that have experienced health care inequity who have not been consulted on these bills. Disparities already exist in end-of-life care so that Black, Hispanic and LGBTQ patients are less likely to receive palliative care or hospice care.

Post-Acute Care News

[Dozens of assisted-living residents died after wandering away unnoticed](#)

Washington Post

December 17, 2023

... Patients with Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive problems walk away from assisted-living facilities just about every day in America, a pattern of neglect by an industry that charges families an average of \$6,000 a month for the explicit promise of safeguarding their loved ones, a Washington Post investigation has found. Since 2018, more than 2,000 people have wandered away from assisted-living and dementia-care units or been left unattended outside, according to *The Post's* exhaustive search of inspection results, incident reports and media accounts nationwide.

[Senior homes left dangerously understaffed amid assisted-living boom](#)

Washington Post

December 17, 2023

Louisville, CO—Lavender Farms, an upscale assisted-living facility in the Boulder suburbs, promised "24/7 on-site care" in its marketing materials. But managers at its operating company, Balfour Senior Living, worried deeply about their ability to care for the elderly residents who roamed the farmhouse-chic corridors at odd hours and sometimes wandered outside unnoticed, documents and interviews show. ... Failures at Balfour facilities are symptoms of deeper problems in the \$34 billion market for assisted living and memory care, a growing industry that now provides care and housing for more than a million Americans, according to industry estimates.

[Staffing issues continue to drive reduced admissions in SNFs](#)

McKnight's Senior Living

December 18, 2023

Nursing home providers continue to struggle with staffing challenges as they aim to reboot admissions in the post-pandemic era, according to the newly released results of a recent Ziegler CFO Hotline survey. "The demand for our SNF services is rising at a rate significantly

higher than our labor force allows,” said one respondent. ... Forty-six percent of the respondents to the November survey indicated that staffing issues have forced a reduction in SNF admissions.

Technology / Innovations News

[Can AI Help You Die?](#) Doctors in New Jersey are experimenting with software to prompt discussions with patients about palliative or hospice care.

Bloomberg

December 18, 2023

Doctors can be slow to talk about the end of the traditional medical road. When they've been trying to manage a life-threatening illness or keep a terminal patient alive, bringing up palliative or hospice care can feel like giving up. But these options can radically improve quality of life, or the end of life, when traditional medicine hasn't helped enough—if patients and their doctors figure it out in time. ... “When someone is actively declining, you can see it, but being able to predict before that happens is hard.” Can artificial intelligence software do a better job than humans of picking that moment? That's the idea behind Serious Illness Care Connect, a software tool that about 150 doctors are testing in a pilot program in New Jersey's largest health-care network, Hackensack Meridian Health. ... The Hackensack Meridian team stresses that the tool isn't making decisions. “Think of this as a ‘check engine’ light,” says Lauren Koniaris, the chief medical informatics officer at Hackensack Meridian.

Today's Encouragement

["We make a living by what we give. We make a life by what we give." Winston Churchill](#)

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