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December 20th, 2023

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Headlines

[Top 5 'Hidden Gem' Palliative Care News Stories from 2023](#)

Palliative Care News

December 18, 2023

Reimbursement and regulation reigned in the news this year, but other important trends garnered attention as well. Below are top five under-the-radar stories that, while important, didn't make our most read this year. The topics range from unmet staff and patient needs, financial and operational headwinds and research fueling innovative care delivery approaches.

[The Language of Hospice Can Help Us Get Better at Discussing Death](#)

TIME

December 18, 2023

Just because death is inevitable doesn't make it easy or natural to talk about. In a new study, researchers wondered if hospice workers—experts in end-of-life care—had lessons to teach the rest of us when it came to speaking with patients and families about death. Daniel Menchik, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Arizona who studies the use of language in different fields of medicine, spent eight months sitting in on team meetings at a hospice care facility that were also open to patients' families. ... In the study, Menchik noticed that hospice workers used three different types of verbs in meetings with family members: predictive, subjunctive, and imperative. Predictive verbs are used to assert things about the future and include words like "will" and "going to." Imperative verbs carry a similar firmness, but include a call to action; the most common one Menchik encounters in medical settings is "should." Subjunctive verbs convey some sort of personal stance when talking about the future. "Think," "feel," "want," and many other expressive phrases fall in this category. When a family starts hospice care, "their capabilities to engage in intense conversations [about death] are usually pretty limited," Menchik says. But he believes that hospice workers help bridge that gap by minimizing their use of imperative verbs. In meetings he observed, imperative verbs made up just 17% of the verb phrases used by hospice professionals. That's fairly uncommon in medicine.

Editor's Note: Use this article to examine the language used in your team meetings; to strengthen your orientation of employees from non-hospice settings; to engage your admissions nurses in a lively dialogue about its applicability to their experiences with patients and families.

Hospice Provider News

[Unions donate to 22 charities](#)

Herald Star (Steubenville, OH)

December 18, 2023

Steubenville, OH—Valley Hospice has received a donation of more than \$4,000 from the Laborers' Local 809 and Ohio LECET [Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust]. Each year, Ohio LECET holds a golf outing, donating proceeds to charities which are chosen by the local unions.



Accelerate Results
Accelerate Growth
Accelerate Learning

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[Carol S. Weeks Memorial Hospice Benefit raises \\$8,200](#)

LootPress (Beckley, WV)

December 18, 2023

Beckley, WV—"The 7th Annual Carol S. Weeks Memorial Hospice Benefit recently raised \$8,200 for Hospice of Southern West Virginia. The three-day event is hosted by Calacino's Pizzeria owner Jeff Weeks. The awareness event is important to Weeks whose mother received hospice services after a battle with an autoimmune disease.

[TCMH foundation event raised nearly \\$31,000](#)

Houston (MO) Herald

December 18, 2023

Texas County, MO—Texas County Memorial Hospital Healthcare Foundation held a successful online auction from Nov. 21-30, raising \$30,844 for TCMH Hospice of Care. The fundraising total included cash and non-cash gifts. All proceeds from the event go to TCMH Hospice of Care, which provides end-of-life and grief support for patients and families in Texas County and surrounding areas.

[Chemed Corporation Announces the Appointment of Michael D. Witzeman as CFO](#)

Business Wire

December 18, 2023

Cincinnati, OH—Today Chemed Corporation's Board of Directors has appointed Michael D. Witzeman as Chief Financial Officer, effective January 1, 2024, following the retirement of

David P. Williams from that role. Mr. Witzeman is currently Chemed's Vice President and Controller and serves as Chemed's principal accounting officer.



TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

[*Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today*](#)

Maryland hospice organization helps parents navigate holidays with terminally ill children

WTOP-FM (Washington, DC)

December 18, 2023

When a family has a child dealing with a terminal illness during the holidays, they also live with the harsh reality that their child may not be around for the next year's festivities. Brian Berger, vice president of care continuum for Hospice of the Chesapeake in Maryland, said parents ask themselves questions like "What can I do with the time and space that I currently have?" and "What experiences can I have with my child?"

Despite Economic Growth in 2023, State of the Commonwealth Report Shows Worrying Trends

News Release

December 18, 2023

Norfolk, VA—There are positive takeaways from Old Dominion University's ninth annual State of the Commonwealth Report. Virginia's economy and population continued to grow in 2023 and a record number of people were employed and in the labor force, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. But the report, produced by ODU's Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy, also raises questions about the commonwealth's future.

VITAS® Healthcare Wins Award for Best-in-Class Employee Experience Across Healthcare in North America

News Release

December 18, 2023

Miami, FL—VITAS Healthcare is once again setting the standard for employer excellence within the healthcare and hospice community. The nation's leading provider of end-of-life care for 45 years achieved the Best-in-Class Award in the category of employee experience in healthcare for North America, presented at the 2023 HRO Today Association Conference on December 1, 2023.

[Racial and Ethnic Disparities Seen in Use of Hospice](#)

HealthDay

December 18, 2023

Racial and ethnic disparities are seen in use of hospice among Medicaid recipients, according to a study published online Dec. 8 in *JAMA Health Forum*. Julie Robison, Ph.D., from the UConn Health Center on Aging in Farmington, and colleagues compared hospice use and hospice length of stay (LOS) by race and ethnicity among Medicaid-only individuals and those with dual eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid (duals).

[El Dorado hospital announces new inpatient hospice care service](#)

KTVE-TV (El Dorado, AR)

December 18, 2023

El Dorado, AR—South Arkansas Regional Hospital has announced that their new services of hospice inpatient service. The hospital has partnered with Arkansas Hospice, the state's largest non-profit provider of hospice care.

[How 19 New Hanover Community Endowment grants totaling \\$53 million will be spent](#)

Star News (Wilmington, NC)

December 18, 2023

Wilmington, NC—The New Hanover Community Endowment has announced more than \$53 million in grants to philanthropic efforts in New Hanover County. Over the next three years, the \$53 million will go toward 19 grants in New Hanover County focused on the healthcare workforce pipeline, early childhood education and health access. The endowment is also granting \$1.4 million to 14 organizations with one-year, non-renewable grants that supports programs like elder care, literacy and youth violence prevention.

Clinical News

[Walgreens' VillageMD to shutter more clinics in cost-cutting plan](#)

Modern Healthcare

December 15, 2023

Walgreens-backed VillageMD is exiting Indiana. The primary care provider plans to shutter all 12 of its Village Medical practices across the state, effective Jan. 19, a VillageMD spokesperson confirmed Friday. Some of the locations are co-located with Walgreens stores, but the stores are not closing, the spokesperson said. The closures stem from Walgreens' larger cost-cutting plan announced in October that involves closing 60 VillageMD-operated clinics in five markets. Earlier this month, VillageMD said 10 clinics in the Jacksonville, Florida, area will close in January. Walgreens is seeking \$1 billion in savings, most of which will come from pharmacy operations and scaling back capital projects by about \$600 million.

[Hospice sponsors Lights of Love event](#)

San Mountain (AL) Reporter

December 18, 2023

The community gathered Tuesday evening at Shepherd's Cove Hospice for their annual "Lights of Love" event to honor loved ones who have passed away and remember them during the holiday season. Over 500 luminaries were lined single file on the front lawn. ... Stormy Dismute, Shepherd's Cove CEO estimated attendance at over 200 for the come and go event.

[Christmas tree dedicated to those who died in hospice care in 2023 stolen in Ellensburg](#)

Source One (Columbia River Basin, WA)

December 18, 2023

Ellensburg, WA—In an unfortunate turn of events, a treasured Christmas tree, integral to a local hospice care volunteer group's annual remembrance event, was reported stolen this past weekend. Hearts & Hands of Kittitas County, formerly known as Hospice Friends, has been a beacon of compassion and support in Ellensburg, dedicating their time to assist those in hospice care. The stolen tree, a centerpiece for their "Tree of Love" event, was intended to honor individuals served by the organization who passed away in 2023. This significant event, originally scheduled for January 25, 2024, not only serves as a memorial but also plays a crucial role in fundraising efforts for the group.

Mergers & Aquisition News

[Private Equity—The Metastasizing Disease Threatening Health Care](#)

Health Affairs

December 18, 2023

In 2010, when purchasing Prospect Medical Holdings, the private equity firm Leonard Green and Partners made numerous lofty promises to state regulators around expanding services, capital investments, and modernization. They assured regulators they would not only maintain hospitals but would increase the quality of care. Over the course of its 10-year ownership, Leonard Green broke many of the promises made to regulators.

Editor's Note: This article articulates some of the challenges that can occur when private equity moves into the healthcare space.

Post-Acute Care News

[Largest nursing home in St. Louis closes suddenly, forcing out 170 residents](#)

Associated Press

December 18, 2023

St. Louis, MO—The largest skilled nursing facility in St. Louis has closed suddenly, forcing about 170 residents to be bused to other care centers. Many left with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. The abrupt shutdown of Northview Village Nursing Home on

Friday came after workers learned they might not be paid and walked out, confusing residents and their relatives. Many family members gathered through the day Saturday outside the facility on the city's north side. Some didn't immediately know where their loved ones were taken.

[Study uncovers racial, geographic disparities in LTSS access](#)

McKnight's Home Care Daily

December 19, 2023

Disparities in access to long-term services and supports (LTSS) create greater financial and health-related challenges for people of color, according to new research by healthcare research firm ATI Advisory. Using data from a University of Michigan Health and Retirement Study, the ATI study sampled 6,232 people aged 55 years old and living in home- or community-based settings.

[Leading Rural PACE Provider Coming to Northeast Ohio](#)

News Release

December 18, 2023

Erie, PA—One Senior Care, a leading PACE provider to rural and Appalachian communities, is proud to announce that its program, LIFE-Northwestern Pennsylvania, has been selected by the Ohio Department of Aging to bring the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) to three counties—Ashtabula, Trumbull, and Mahoning—in Northeast Ohio.

[Announcing the Winners of the 2023 SHN Architecture & Design Awards](#)

Senior Housing News

December 18, 2023

Senior Housing News, an Aging Media Network publication, is pleased to announce the winners of the 2023 *Senior Housing News* Architecture & Design Awards. Communities across the United States and the globe submitted new construction and renovation/repositioning projects this year, vying for top honors across 17 categories.

Hospice

1. Winner: Pathways Hospice Inpatient Care Center—Fort Collins, CO
2. Second Place: VITAS Healthcare Hospice House of Orange County—Santa Ana, CA
3. Third Place: Hospice of Marion County, Grace Davis Hall House—Ocala, FL

General News

[Caregivers Are Invisible. They Shouldn't Be](#)

By Emma Nadler, LPCC

Newsweek

December 18, 2023

Eight years ago, I unexpectedly joined the other 38 million unpaid caregivers in the United States. The AARP estimates that 11.5 percent of the U.S. population are caring for family members in 2023. We are many, and somehow, we are still grossly overlooked and under

supported in nearly every way. My daughter, Eden, now in second grade, was born with a rare genetic deletion—so rare it does not have a name. She lives on a feeding tube, endures various chronic medical challenges, cognitive impairment, severe autism, and requires around-the-clock care.

[**Berkshire VNA Nurses and Healthcare Professionals Reach Tentative Agreement on First MNA Contract to Stabilize Staffing and Improve Patient Care**](#)

PRNewswire

December 18, 2023

Pittsfield, MA—The nurses and healthcare professionals of the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association, represented by the Massachusetts Nurses Association, reached a tentative agreement on December 15 with Berkshire Health Systems, agreeing on contract terms that give BVNA clinicians a wage step scale and tackle some productivity issues to help with recruitment and retention and address patient care access problems.&nb sp;

[**After bitter strike, nurses ratify new three-year contract**](#)

Nj.com

December 16, 2023

The nurses union at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital ratified a new contract Friday, two weeks after reaching an agreement with the hospital following a bitter strike.

[**Employers increasingly relying on older workers, Pew Research study finds**](#)

McKnight's Home Care Daily

December 18, 2023

The share of people over the age of 65 that are employed has almost doubled in the last 35 years, according to a new report by Pew Research. ... It found that almost 20% of Americans aged 65 and above were employed in 2023, and these workers are working more hours and earning more money than ever before.

International News

[**Scottish hospices are stretched to the brink, says charity**](#)

BBC/Yahoo! News

December 18, 2023

Hospices have called for additional funding from the Scottish government as they face an “unprecedented” collective deficit of £16m [\$20.24 million USD]. Hospice UK wants additional funding support to be announced in the Scottish budget on Tuesday. The charity has said “spiralling” staff costs due to NHS pay increases as well as rising running costs are stretching hospices “to the brink”. The Scottish government said it strives to support hospices where possible.

Today's 10-Second Question

Today's 10-Second Question

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