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December 31st, 2023

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Headlines

[**'Medicare Advantage plans are crippling rural hospitals,' CEO says**](#)

Modern Healthcare; 12/28/23

Delayed Medicare Advantage reimbursement is among the top concerns of rural hospital operators, one of several factors expected to be a drag on rural hospital finances in 2024. Rural hospitals, which tend to run on thinner operating margins than metro-area hospitals, have been hurt by reimbursement cuts, staffing constraints, inflation, the aging population and interest rate hikes.

Hospice Provider News

[**Open house held in Gloucester for Sentara Home Health and Hospice**](#)

Gazette-Journal (Gloucester and Matthews counties, VA); 12/27/23

Gloucester, VA—Sentara held an open house for its new Home Health and Hospice location in Gloucester on Tuesday, Dec. 12. The business will provide accessible and high-quality nursing to residents of Gloucester and the surrounding area, according to a release.

[**Tidewell Foundation's Longboat building no longer listed for sale**](#)

Sarasota Observer; 12/28/23

The Tidewell Foundation and Empath Health aren't leaving Longboat Key any time soon. Recently, the organization's Longboat Key building was listed for sale by Ian Black Real Estate for \$3.1 million. But that was an error, according to new information from Empath Health Chief Mission Access Officer Rhonda Sanders-Allamon. The listing is no longer active. Sanders-Allamon said the idea of selling the property has been discussed by the executive board, but nothing was officially voted on.



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[**Amedisys finds answer key in Medalogix Pulse**](#)

PRNewswire; 12/28/23

Nashville, TN—Medalogix, the leading data science and clinical decision support company specializing in the advancement of patient care in home health, hospice, and strategic payor initiatives in the home, and Amedisys, a leading provider of home health, hospice and high-acuity care in the home, announced an expanded partnership with the implementation of Medalogix Pulse for Home Health patients.

Palliative Care Provider News

[Too few cancer patients get palliative care when urinary blockages arise](#)

HealthDay News; 12/28/23

The prognosis is poor for many cancer patients who develop serious urinary blockages, but researchers say less than half receive palliative care. ... Hospice care can make patients comfortable and head off aggressive treatments for patients with malignant ureteral obstruction (MUO) who are nearing the end of life, said lead researcher Dr. Michael Felice, of Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Ill.

[Addressing the intimacy needs of partners of patients with terminal cancer](#)

International Society for Sexual Medicine; 12/26/23

A recent study was designed to address the overlooked sexual needs of patients with life-limiting cancers in palliative care. It explored both the physical and psychological elements of intimacy, emphasizing the importance of sexuality support in the palliative phase.



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Clinical News

[People are talking to their dead loved ones—and they can't stop laughing. It's a refreshing trend.](#)

USA Today; 12/29/23

Everyone grieves differently—and if you've spent any time on TikTok in recent days, you might have noticed some unexpected, unusual methods. Some people—to the tune of millions of likes—are confessing or sharing stories with their dead loved ones directly on social media.

Hodge Podge

KDLM-AM (Detroit Lakes, MN); 12/28/23

Connie DeKrey, grief specialist for Hospice of the Red River Valley, talks about how to move on after a loss, but stressed that everyone deals with loss differently. “New Years has its own set of emotions that are prompted. For instance, families have gathered from a distance, and traveled, and there’s a real anticipation of that. But at some point everyone has to go home again and so that extra support and connection ... it can be a real letdown when everyone has to go back to their own homes. There can be some hesitancy, even dread , about beginning the new year without that loved one. But there might also be a sense of hope or expectancy of something positive.”

[Editor’s Note: To listen to the 7-minute interview, click [here.](#)]

Mississippi health department says some medical marijuana products are being retested for safety

Mississippi Public Broadcasting; 12/28/23

The Mississippi State Department of Health said Wednesday that “a large number” of medical marijuana products are on hold so they can be retested. The department first issued the hold on Dec. 21. A news release from the department said the products are being retested “to validate results related to the use of pesticides and presence of mycotoxins,” which are produced by fungi. No illnesses from the products have been reported, the department said.

Virtual care works best when patients see their own family doctor, study finds

News Release; 12/27/23

Toronto, ON—Compared to patients who had a virtual visit with their own family doctor, those who received virtual care from a doctor outside of their family care team were 66 percent more likely to visit the emergency department within seven days, according to new research. The study, led by researchers at the University Health Network, Unity Health Toronto, and ICES, also showed that patients receiving virtual care outside of an existing family doctor-patient relationship were 25 percent more likely to have an in-person visit and 88 percent more likely to have another virtual visit within seven days.

Alabama aims to get medical marijuana program started in 2024

Associated Press/U.S. News & World Report; 12/28/23

Montgomery, AL—Members of the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission said Thursday they are aiming to get the state’s medical marijuana program underway in 2024 after a series of delays and legal disputes. Commissioners voted 7-2 for a motion declaring they have no plans to pause license awards despite ongoing lawsuits and appeals from losing companies.

Regulatory News

[Joint Commission updates suicide as sentinel event policy](#)

Becker's Behavioral Health, by Rylee Wilson; 12/15/23

The Joint Commission is [expanding](#) its definition of suicide as a sentinel event.

Public Policy News

[More than 200 terminally ill Vermonters qualified for the state's aid-in-dying law in its first decade](#)

VT Digger, 12/28/23

Over 200 terminally ill patients have sought and qualified to receive life-ending drugs since Vermont first legalized medical-aid-in-dying more than a decade ago, according to a recent report from the Vermont Department of Health. Vermont first legalized the practice—sometimes referred to as “death with dignity” by supporters or “assisted suicide” by opponents—in May 2013. From then until the end of June 2023, 203 Vermonters sought and qualified for the medication, according to the report. Not all of those who had access to the drugs obtained or used them, according to the Department of Health. Some died from the underlying disease. ... A vast majority of those who utilized the program had been diagnosed with terminal cancer, according to the report.

General News

[Assisted living residents surprised on Christmas Day—‘Value these beautiful lives’](#)

WTVR-TV (Richmond, VA); 12/29/23

Henrico County, VA—Residents at an assisted living community in the West End received a surprise on Christmas Day thanks to workers at a Richmond Hospice service. Debbie Johnston, a registered nurse at Serenity First Hospice, said her team members adopted Morningside in the West End to give residents a “fairytale” for some residents who have not had a Christmas gift for years. As a result, the hospice workers shopped for gifts and promoted a present drive over the past few weeks. Additionally, business and members of the community made donations.

[Expressing end of life care decisions through art](#)

ChannelEye; 12/20/23

Jersey Hospice Care is working with Les Amis to help its residents understand how they can plan their future care and support.

[Lane County home care and hospice workers authorize strike, but hold out hope for future negotiations](#)

KEZI-TV (Eugene, OR); 12/29/23

Springfield, OR—PeaceHealth home and hospice care nurses represented by the Oregon Nurses Association voted this week to authorize a strike, but one will not be called immediately. Jo Turner, a hospice nurse and member of ONA's executive committee at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Home Care Services, said at a press conference on Friday that a

“significant majority” of nurses voted between December 27 and 28 to authorize the strike, but a decision to go on strike is not one that is taken lightly. “We are not calling for a strike—yet,” she said.

[The power of music in healing life-threatening illnesses and keeping hope alive](#)

Medium, by Jess Whorton; 12/27/23

Music has long been recognized for its therapeutic effects on the mind and body. Research has shown that music can lower blood pressure, heart and respiratory rates, reduce cardiac complications, increase immune response, and boost natural opiates. Let’s explore the power of music in healing life-threatening illnesses and keeping hope alive...

Non-print News

[Year in review, one word, and an exciting announcement for 2024](#)

Teleios TCN Talks, by Chris Comeaux; 12/27/23

In this TCNtalks podcast episode, host Chris Comeaux delves into a recap of the top podcasts of 2023, covering a diverse array of critical topics such as staffing challenges, Medicare Advantage, future trends, mental and emotional health, and reimagining the future of hospice and palliative care.

Other News

[Hospice Staff Promotions & Additions](#)

- Sangre de Cristo Community Care (Pueblo, CO) has announced that Dr. Abner Fernandez has been appointed as the new Medical Director. Dr. Fernandez is board-certified in Family Medicine and is fluent in both English and Spanish, which further expands access to care for all residents of the region. ([Arkansas Valley Voice](#))
- HopeWest, a leading nonprofit healthcare organization serving Colorado’s Western Slope, is pleased to announce the appointment of Peter Schoomaker as its new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Schoomaker succeeds former HopeWest CFO of 26-years, Sarah Walsh, who is transitioning into an accounting role. ([The Herald Times](#))

Today's Encouragement

[Without music, life would be a mistake. ~Friedrich Nietzsche](#)

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