



# HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE TODAY

March 1st, 2024

## Contents

1. [CMS finalizes important changes to Medicare enrollment requirements for hospice, home health providers](#)
2. [Report of Hospice Election for Part D \(Response File\)](#)
3. [The devil's in the details: Hospice providers face Claim Denials for Election Statement technicalities](#)
4. [The Medicare Care Choices Model was associated with reductions in disparities in the use of hospice care for Medicare beneficiaries with terminal illness.](#)
5. [St. Croix Hospice improves access to end-of-life care with new branch in Clarinda, IA](#)
6. [NIA is leading efforts to coordinate NIH palliative care research](#)
7. ["The great escape": How an incident of elopement gave rise to trauma informed palliative care for a patient experiencing multiple disadvantage](#)
8. [Home-based palliative care shows promise in reducing ER visits, hospitalizations](#)
9. [Many older adults don't receive palliative care before death](#)
10. [Debate intensifies over palliative care's reach: Wootton vs. Finlay's divergent views](#)
11. [Bilingual patient navigation can improve palliative care outcomes for Hispanic patients](#)
12. [Facing dementia: Clarifying end-of-life choices, supporting better lives](#)
13. [Writing condolence cards supports nurses as well as deceased patients' families](#)

14. [Music therapy could help manage the pain of bereavement](#)
15. [False Claims Act - 2023 Year in Review](#)
16. [Untangling the history, causes behind the precipitous home health aide utilization drop](#)
17. [\(Private Equity Issue\) Anesthesiology group must cut ties with 5 hospitals: Colorado AG](#)
18. [Musician Mom Cat Janice dead at 31: 'Cat saw her music go places she never expected'](#)
19. [Inspirational duo: Boy with terminal condition and puppy tackle 100km challenge for hospice care](#)
20. [How to help elderly parents from a distance: Tech can ease logistical, emotional burden](#)
21. [Why not-for-profit health systems need positive margins: Deloitte](#)
22. [Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 2/29/24 per nasdaq.com](#)
23. [Today's Encouragement: March is a tomboy with touseled hair](#)

## Headlines

### **CMS finalizes important changes to Medicare enrollment requirements for hospice, home health providers**

*JDSupra; 2/28/24*

The US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized important changes to the Medicare enrollment regulations applicable to hospices and home health agencies (HHAs), including increasing the level of screening that hospice providers are subject to and limiting a Medicare-enrolled hospice's ability to change majority ownership to once every 36 months.

### **Report of Hospice Election for Part D (Response File)**

*U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services - Guidance Portal; 2/26/24*

The purpose of this Change Request (CR) is to define the response file related to CR 13202. [Click on the title's link and follow prompts to download the Guidance Document.]

## Hospice Provider News

### **The devil's in the details: Hospice providers face Claim Denials for Election Statement technicalities**

*JDSupra, by Lanchi Nguyen Bombalier and Charmaine Mech; 2/29/24*

Since the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (“CMS”) paused much of its audit activity during the COVID Public Health Emergency, the most recent rounds of Medicare audit activity may represent the first “look” at the new Election Statement forms that many hospice providers adopted under the new Medicare election statement requirements effective in October 2020. Unfortunately, these initial audit results from the Medicare Administrative Contractors (“MACs”) suggest that hospice providers and MAC reviewers may not necessarily see eye-to-eye on what information must be included in the new Election Statement.



**Accelerate Results**  
**Accelerate Growth**  
**Accelerate Learning**

Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today

### **The Medicare Care Choices Model was associated with reductions in disparities in the use of hospice care for Medicare beneficiaries with terminal illness**

*Health Serv Res by Matthew J Niedzwiecki, Lauren Vollmer Farrow, Jonathan Gellar, R Vincent Pohl, Arnold Chen, Lynn Miescier, Keith Kranker; 2/29/24*

**Conclusions:** Medicare Choices Model (MCCM) increased hospice use and quality of end-of-life care for model enrollees from underserved groups and reduced disparities in hospice use and having multiple emergency department visits.

## **St. Croix Hospice improves access to end-of-life care with new branch in Clarinda, IA**

*PR Newswire, by St. Croix Hospice; 2/29/24*

St. Croix Hospice expands their presence in Iowa with a new branch in Clarinda. This location marks the fifteenth St. Croix Hospice branch in Iowa and helps patients and families residing in the surrounding communities access exceptional hospice care from local caregivers and clinical staff.

## **Palliative Care Provider News**

### **NIA is leading efforts to coordinate NIH palliative care research**

*National Institute on Aging, by Chandra Keller and Alexis Bakos; 2/28/24*

- New NIH collaborative approach to palliative care research ...
- New opportunity for a palliative care consortium ...



Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today

## **"The great escape": How an incident of elopement gave rise to trauma informed palliative care for a patient experiencing multiple disadvantage**

*BMC Palliat Care, by Sam Quinn, Libby Ferguson, Derek Read, and Naomi Richards; 2/28/24*

Background: This case report ... illustrates how unresolved traumatic experiences across the life course can affect a patient's engagement with palliative care and offers insights into the flexibility and adaptations necessary for taking a trauma informed approach to care for an individual experiencing multiple disadvantage.

## Home-based palliative care shows promise in reducing ER visits, hospitalizations

*Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 2/28/24*

Patients who receive home-based palliative care (HBPC) services experience fewer emergency department visits, fewer hospitalizations and lower costs once they start receiving services. That's according to a recent study conducted by the West Health Research Institute of Blue Shield of California.

## Many older adults don't receive palliative care before death

*MedScape, by Marilyn Larkin; 2/28/24*

"One of the challenges and a barrier to accessing palliative home care is the difficulty of predicting survival," Amy Hsu, PhD, an investigator at the Bruyère Research Institute in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, told Medscape Medical News. "Clinicians are good at prognosticating when a patient might be entering their last 3-6 weeks of life, but they have a harder time predicting if someone will survive 6 months or longer." The team developed the Risk Evaluation for Support: Predictions for Elder-life in their Communities Tool (RESPECT) to see whether access to predicted survival data could inform conversations about a patient's status and palliative care needs. The study was published online on February 26 in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.



Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today

## Debate intensifies over palliative care's reach: Wootton vs. Finlay's divergent views

*The Wall Street Journal, by Getta Pillai; 2/29/24*

Discover the differing perspectives of Sarah Wootton and Dr. Ilora Finlay on the effectiveness of palliative care. Gain insights into the challenges and potential solutions in end-of-life care.

### **Bilingual patient navigation can improve palliative care outcomes for Hispanic patients**

*Hospice News, by Holly Vossel; 2/28/24*

Bicultural and bilingual palliative patient navigator interventions may be a key to improving access to goal concordant care among Hispanic populations with serious illness, according to recent research.

Researchers in a recent clinical trial sought to address whether integration of bilingual patient navigation interventions could improve palliative care outcomes in Hispanic patients with serious, noncancer illnesses.

## **Clinical News**

### **Facing dementia: Clarifying end-of-life choices, supporting better lives**

*The Hastings Center; 2/28/24*

The report includes 10 recommendations for policymakers, research funders, clinical and legal practitioners, and professional societies.

... “Facing Dementia: Clarifying End-of-Life Choices, Supporting Better Lives” is the major product of a Hastings Center research project, codirected by Hastings senior research scholar Nancy Berlinger and President Emerita Mildred Z. Solomon.



# HOSPICE ANALYTICS

## NATIONAL HOSPICE LOCATOR

*NOW SORTED BY HOSPICE QUALITY SCORES*

Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today

### **Writing condolence cards supports nurses as well as deceased patients' families**

*ONS Voice, by Casey S. Kennedy; 2/29/24*

During extended treatment and end-of-life care, patients, their family and caregivers, and the healthcare team can form close bonds and relationships. Those ties are abruptly severed when a patient dies, leaving each party to grieve alone. For healthcare professionals, sending a condolence card can provide closure for themselves and support for a deceased patient's family, a team of nurses reported in an article published in the December 2023 issue of the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*.

### **Music therapy could help manage the pain of bereavement**

*The Conversation; 2/28/24*

Grief has always inspired songwriters. Popular songs including Let Me Go, by Gary Barlow, Eric Clapton's Tears in Heaven and The Living Years by Mike and the Mechanics, were all written as a way of working through the grief of losing a loved one. ... Barlow's Let Me Go, however, is a remarkably upbeat and joyful record, written from the perspective of the pop star's stillborn daughter, Poppy.

## **Regulatory News**

### **False Claims Act - 2023 Year in Review**

*JD Supra; by William Athanas, A. Lee Bentley III, Gene Besen, Ryan Dean, Jonathan Ferry, Daniel Fortune, Giovanni Giarratana, Ty Howard, Elisha Kobre, Anna Lashley, Gregory Marshall, Lyndsay Medlin, Stephen Moulton, Ocasha Musah, Scarlett Singleton Nokes, Cara Rice, Brad Robertson, Tara Sarosiek, Jack Selden, Erin Sullivan, Courtlyn Ward, Virginia Wright; 2/28/24*

As we do every year, this issue revisits the key cases and other developments from the year gone by. And by most metrics, 2023 was a notable year for the False Claims Act (FCA).

### **Untangling the history, causes behind the precipitous home health aide utilization drop**

*Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 2/28/24*

In the last home health proposed rule from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency in charge of reimbursement rates sent out a request for information on home health aide utilization. Specifically, the agency wondered why Medicare-covered home health aide visits and utilization had fallen off a cliff over the last few decades. According to the Center for Medicare Advocacy, home health aide visits declined by 90% from 1998 to 2019.

## **Mergers & Aquisition News**

### **(Private Equity Issue) Anesthesiology group must cut ties with 5 hospitals: Colorado AG**

*Becker's Hospital Review, by Alan Condon; 2/27/24*

Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser has announced an agreement with U.S. Anesthesia Partners that resolves the private equity-backed company's alleged anticompetitive business practices that drove up prices for consumers receiving surgical anesthesia services.

*Publisher's note: Private equity concerns have impacted hospices the past few years. Private equity concerns in other fields are also catching our attention.*



## General News

### **Musician Mom Cat Janice dead at 31: 'Cat saw her music go places she never expected'**

*People, by Jordan Green; 2/28/24*

In January, Janice went viral on TikTok after releasing the song "Dance You Outta My Head" inspired by her son. On Wednesday, musician Cat Janice died from cancer. The announcement of the singer-songwriter's death was made via a post on her Instagram account by her family. ... "We are eternally thankful for the outpouring of love that Catherine and our family have received over the past few months," the post continued.

### **Inspirational duo: Boy with terminal condition and puppy tackle 100km challenge for hospice care**

*BNN, by Sakchi Khandelwal; 2/29/24*

In Leyland, a heartwarming story unfolds as nine-year-old Jacob, diagnosed with a terminal lung condition and Down's Syndrome, takes on a monumental challenge alongside his cockapoo puppy, Ralph. The pair have committed to walking every day in February, aiming to hit the 100km mark to support Derian House, a hospice providing care for over 400 children with life-limiting conditions in the North West [United Kingdom]. Despite his non-verbal status and health hurdles, Jacob's journey with Ralph underscores the profound companionship and emotional support pets can offer.

### **How to help elderly parents from a distance: Tech can ease logistical, emotional burden**

*USA Today, by Marc Ramirez; 2/28/24*

As a neuropsychologist trained in developing technology for cognitively impaired [older adults](#), Alyssa Weakley's research at the University of California, Davis, made her acutely aware of the challenges of long-distance caregiving. ... Soon, she and her family found themselves in a position shared by nearly 6 million other Americans, acting as caregivers from a complicated and often distressing distance. According to a 2020

AARP report, long-distance caregivers represent more than 1 in 10 of the country's estimated 53 million family caregivers, meaning they live an hour or more from their care recipient; on average, they live about 450 miles away.

*Editor's Note: What systems do you have in place to communicate with and support family members who live long-distance, who never have the opportunity to meet with any hospice team members in person?*

## **Other News**

### **Why not-for-profit health systems need positive margins: Deloitte**

*Becker's Hospital CFO, by Andrew Cass; 2/28/24*

Health system margins are the "lifeblood of a healthy, patient-centered, innovative health care system and community," according to a [report](#) from consulting firm Deloitte. "Claims that profits are not important in fact undermine the ability to fund the mission, serve the community, and deliver better, equitable care," Deloitte said in the report. ... "[Systems] should consider a holistic approach that integrates margin drivers to create a balanced transformation portfolio, according to the report. Timing and sequencing are important within each driver and "a full understanding of the dollar impact and priority of each is necessary for margin improvement to be successful."

### **Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 2/29/24 per [nasdaq.com](https://www.nasdaq.com)**

- [Adus HomeCare \(ADUS: \\$92.20\)](#)
- [Amedisys \(AMED: \\$92.84\)](#)
  
- [BrightSpring Health \(BTSG: \\$8.92\)](#)
- [Encompass \(EHC: \\$74.41\)](#)
- [Enhabit \(EHAB: \\$8.99\)](#)
- [Ensign Group \(ENSG: \\$125.04\)](#)
- [HCA Healthcare \(HCA: \\$311.71\)](#)

- [Humana \(HUM: \\$350.37\)](#)
- [Pennant Group \(PNTG: \\$18.60\)](#)
  
- [Vitas / Chemed Corp \(CHE: \\$626.03\)](#)

## Today's Encouragement

**March is a tomboy with touseled hair, a mischievous smile, mud on her shoes, and a laugh in her voice. - Hal Borland**

### **The Fine Print:**

**Paywalls:** Some links may take readers to articles that either require registration or are behind a paywall. **Disclaimer:** Hospice & Palliative Care Today provides brief summaries of news stories of interest to hospice, palliative, and end-of-life care professionals (typically taken directly from the source article). Hospice & Palliative Care Today is not responsible or liable for the validity or reliability of information in these articles and directs the reader to authors of the source articles for questions or comments. Additionally, Dr. Cordt Kassner, Publisher, and Dr. Joy Berger, Editor in Chief, welcome your [feedback](#) regarding content of Hospice & Palliative Care Today. **Unsubscribe:** Hospice & Palliative Care Today is a free subscription email. If you believe you have received this email in error, or if you no longer wish to receive Hospice & Palliative Care Today, please unsubscribe [here](#) or reply to this email with the message "Unsubscribe". Thank you.