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August 7th, 2024

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Headlines

What's changed in hospice in 2024?

Managed Healthcare Executive; By Deborah Abrams Kaplan; 8/5/24

Hospice use continues to grow as more older people have serious diseases, leading to the need for more palliative care. At the same time, CMS is adapting and trying new models to measure and improve quality and pay for services. The federal government spent \$23.7 billion on hospice care in 2022, according to the latest Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) report, with at least 1.7 million Medicare beneficiaries receiving service. This includes nearly half of Medicare beneficiaries who died that year. Here's what to expect over the next year. [Summarized]

- Hospice carve-out
- Physician eligibility
- Show me the money

- What's coming up in 2025?

Notable Mentions: Tarrah Lowry, interim president of Trustbridge and chief operating officer of Empath Health; Patrick Harrison, J.D., senior director of regulatory and compliance at the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO).

CMS 2025 Hospice Final Rule [published 8/6/24]: Additional responses

1. [CMS Finalizes 2025 Hospice Payment Rule: A Modest Increase Amid Rising Challenges; National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation \(NPHI\); 7/31/24](#)
2. [CMS Posts FY 2025 Hospice Wage Index Final Rule; Community Health Accreditation Partner \(CHAP\); 7/31/24](#)
3. [CMS Raises Medicare Pay For Hospices By 2.9% In Fiscal 2025; KFF Health News; 7/31/24](#)
4. [CMS gives hospices payment bump of 2.9 percent for FY 2025; McKnight's Home Care; 7/30/24](#)
5. [Hospice providers set for Medicare pay hike; Modern Healthcare; 7/30/24](#)
6. [Hospice 2.9% increase 'falls short'; Healthcare Finance News; 8/1/24](#)

Hospice Provider News

Hospice advocate Judi Lund Person ... featured on Close Up Radio

Western Slope Now, Ashburn, VA; by EIN Presswire; 7/26/24 (article) and 7/29/24 (recording)

... Talking about where you'd like to be, who you'd like to be, and what you'd like to do is essential to entering this life-stage with confidence and grace. As the former Vice President of Regulatory and Compliance at the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and a longtime advocate for hospice services under Medicare, Judi Lund Person has been working hard for more than 40 years to protect the definition of hospice care and to provide resources and guides for hospice providers to meet the Medicare requirements and provide high quality hospice care. ... Her passion for supporting patients and families during and after death began as a child. "When I was 12, my dad had a heart attack at night and passed when he was only 42. With two younger sisters, ages eight and ten, I was stunned that no one seemed to know what to do with us concerning our grief as children. We were left to try and figure it out on our own.

I always thought that wasn't quite right. Deep down, that experience was a driver for my career. I always knew families deserved more support during the grieving process," shares Ms. Person.

Editor's Note: [Click here for recording.](#)



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Avow Kids receives transformational gift from Naples Children & Education Foundation

Avow Hospice press release; 7/23/24

Avow Foundation has received a generous grant of \$115,000 from the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival. The grant is specifically intended for Avow Kids, a program for children ages 5 - 17 that provides support and companionship to youth experiencing any type of grief. The grant will support Avow Kids' various services, such as individual counseling, support groups, workshops, camps, music therapy, movie nights, and more.

Bluegrass Care Navigators receives grant award from Disabled Veterans National Foundation

Appalachian News-express; 8/5/24

Bluegrass Care Navigators announced in a statement it has received a grant from the Disabled Veterans National Foundation for \$18,000 which will allow BCN to focus its Integrative Medicine therapies on serving more of veteran patients.

Golf For Guthrie Hospice raises more than \$45,000

Morning Times; by 7/3/24

[NY] Guthrie is pleased to announce that the 22nd annual Golf for Guthrie Hospice Tournament raised more than \$45,000. The funds will directly support Hospice services, helping to care for those in the final stage of life. More than 150 golfers and numerous volunteers participated for this inspiring cause. The event included a “Pot of Gold” drive to the green contest and three hole-in-one contests. To add to the excitement, Williams Toyota of Sayre and Gannon Associates teamed up to offer a brand-new Toyota Rav 4 as the hole-in-one grand prize.



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Palliative Care Provider News

[VNS Health develops AI methodology for palliative care patient assessments](#)

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 8/5/24

Research by VNS Health has found that generative AI systems can help clinicians better assess and predict patients’ palliative care needs.

Clinical News

[How healthcare is dealing with pain management disparities](#)

Modern Healthcare; by Mari Devereaux; 7/29/24

Patients of color receive different pain care than white patients, and universities are turning to implicit bias training for clinicians and revamping medical school curricula to help fix the problem. Disparities between racial groups in pain management largely exist due to the widespread, incorrect belief among providers that race is biological rather than a social construct, according to experts. This ingrained, sometimes unconscious assumption that people of color experience pain differently means marginalized communities often go without

adequate medication or treatment for their pain... Here are strategies institutions and states are trying to reduce bias and improve pain treatment among marginalized groups.

1. Implicit bias training
2. Anti-oppressive medical curriculum
3. Patient advocacy and non-opioid pain management

Kids' hospice offers hope-of-life care in Las Vegas Valley homes

Review Journal; by Jeff Burbank; 8/5/24

Known for palliative care for kids and young adults ending at age 21, the program (1Care) is called a “hospice” in the newer sense of the word, said Courtney Kaplan, director of community affairs for 1Care. The program is 100 percent covered by government-funded Medicaid. “Hospice is provided for a person with a terminal illness whose doctor believes he or she has six months or less to live if the illness runs its natural course,” the institute states. But in 1Care’s juvenile hospice, palliative care is provided for children with severe conditions but who don’t necessarily have terminal illnesses and can receive treatment while living with their parents and siblings, Kaplan said.



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'Restored faith in humanity:' What's it like to volunteer at Mercy Health Hospice of the Valley?

[OH] Mahoning Matters; by Kelcey Norris; 8/5/24

Jennifer Burgoyne, Hospice of the Valley’s volunteer coordinator, described the volunteering experience as getting “a paycheck of the heart.”

Post-Acute Care News

Cleveland Clinic names first Chief AI Officer

Cleveland Clinic press release; 7/29/24

Cleveland Clinic has appointed its first Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer to direct the use of AI across the health system. Ben Shahshahani, Ph.D., a technology executive with more than 20 years of experience in AI and machine learning, will serve as Vice President, Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer, starting Aug. 12, 2024. *Publisher's note: Hospice implications...?*

Technology / Innovations News

10 Steps to Creating a Data-Driven Culture

Harvard Business Review; by David Waller; 2/6/20

Exploding quantities of data have the potential to fuel a new era of fact-based innovation in corporations, backing up new ideas with solid evidence. Buoyed by hopes of better satisfying customers, streamlining operations, and clarifying strategy, firms have for the past decade amassed data, invested in technologies, and paid handsomely for analytical talent. Yet for many companies a strong, data-driven culture remains elusive, and data are rarely the universal basis for decision making. Why is it so hard? ... So we've distilled 10 data commandments to help create and sustain a culture with data at its core.

1. Data-driven culture starts at the (very) top.
2. Choose metrics with care — and cunning.
3. Don't pigeonhole your data scientists.
4. Fix basic data-access issues quickly.
5. Quantify uncertainty.

Publisher's note: Please see this interesting (albeit slightly dated) article for all 10 steps. Thanks to Ernesto Lopez, President of The Denver Hospice, for sharing this article.



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International News

Paramedics treating patients' palliative needs at home benefits everyone

[Canada] The Conversation; 8/5/24

In a medical system that seems to be under constant bombardment —

economic, pandemic, demographic — it's refreshing to see solid evidence to support a new idea that improves care while saving valuable time and money. It's exactly what has been happening in several Canadian provinces that have been implementing innovative palliative programs to improve paramedic support to patients with palliative care needs. The idea is that paramedics, with some extra training, can provide patient-centred care in the homes of people living with cancer and other life-limiting conditions. It is intended to make patients as comfortable as possible as they spend their last days at home, which is where most Canadians say they'd prefer to die.

Other News

Today's Heartwarming Story [LMHPCO Conference]



A great time in New Orleans at the Louisiana ~ Mississippi Hospice & Palliative Care Organization Annual Conference!

Today's Encouragement

**Without passion, you won't do something 100%. That's the bottom line.
~Apolo Ohno, American speed skater and eight-time medalist**



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