

# Marketing with Educational Resources

## Strategies for Hospice and Palliative Care Organizations



Content marketing strategies to help you connect with:

- referrers
- family caregivers
- donors
- volunteers
- prospective employees

A STRATEGY GUIDE FROM



***Elder Pages Online*** LLC

Content Marketing Tools for Elder Care Professionals

[www.elderpagesonline.com](http://www.elderpagesonline.com)  
707-477-0700 (Pacific)  
[info@elderpagesonline.com](mailto:info@elderpagesonline.com)

# A Note from Tasha



My greatest joy is helping eldercare professionals promote their business while also helping families cope with the tremendous responsibility of caregiving.

## The challenge of late referrals

Late referrals are the bane of the hospice sector. Nobody wants to admit that the end is near: not the patients, not the professionals, not the patient's family. With over a decade of service to hospice, we recommend the following strategies to counteract this hesitancy and encourage earlier engagement:

- **Become the most useful hospice** to your referrers.
- **Become the experts in family caregiving and serious illness.** Reframe your expertise upstream from death and dying.
- **Market your palliative care program as distinct from hospice.** It needs its own brand and messaging to deliver the earlier referrals you seek.

## My background as a research scientist

For 18 years I worked on multimillion dollar, multimedia family caregiver interventions funded by the National Institute on Aging. In 1997 I became a hospice volunteer and saw firsthand how tough, and yet how rewarding it is to walk beside a fellow human being on this journey through the last chapters of life.

## Our history

In 2007 I opened Elder Pages Online, LLC, as a way to provide 24/7 support to families while giving hospice professionals high-quality content marketing tools that would help them stand out from their competitors.

## Where research meets caregiving

All our materials are evidence based yet written at an easy-to-read, eighth grade level. (Better for health literacy. And even PhDs prefer to read shorter words!)

## Best practices

Over the years we have worked with hundreds of hospice providers across the country. We have been amazed at the creativity that emerges as people find inventive ways to use their educational resources to promote their businesses. In this booklet we share the best of what works in content marketing for reaching your referrers, as well as family caregivers and other constituents (donors, volunteers, prospective employees.)

## We save you time

We are dedicated to providing top quality content marketing materials while responding nimbly to tech innovations. We do the writing and handle the technology so you can do what you do best: provide superlative care to those in need.

Tasha Beauchamp, MSc  
Webmaster, Research Scientist  
Elder Pages Online, LLC

# Become the most useful hospice

## Provide your referrers with resources that fit easily in their work flow

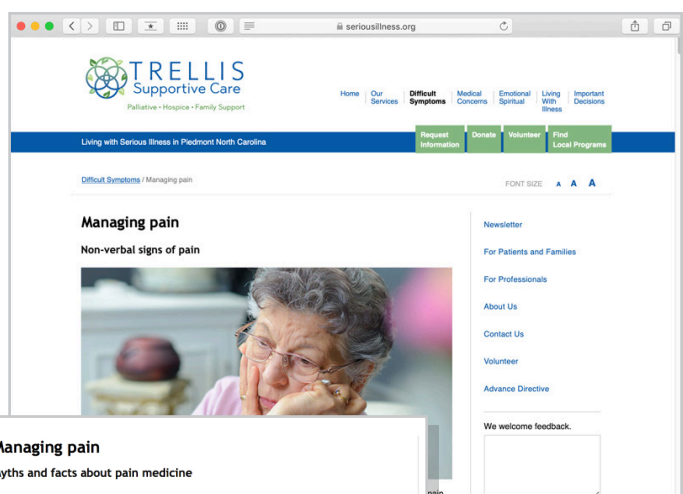
To stand out from your competitors, you need to rise above donuts and refrigerator magnets.

## Pick a theme each month

The gift of knowledge not only helps your referrers, it also places your hospice in a favorable light as a well-rounded thought leader, one that stays abreast of the psychosocial, medical, and spiritual needs of patients and their families.

To highlight your interdisciplinary expertise, draw upon these health observances and hallmarks of quality care to support your referrers:

- **January:** Hope and Serious Illness
- **February:** Congestive Heart Failure (*American Heart Month*)
- **March:** Medication Management
- **April:** Advance Care Planning (*National Healthcare Decisions Day*)
- **May:** Dementia (*Mental Health Month*)
- **June:** Cancer (*National Cancer Survivors Day*)
- **July:** Care Transitions
- **August:** Fall Prevention
- **September:** Pain (*Pain Awareness Month*)
- **October:** COPD
- **November:** Family Caregiving (*National Family Caregivers Month*)
- **December:** Quality of Life, Spirituality



Let us help you with:

- ☒ Content-rich websites
- ☒ Educational handouts
- ☒ Monthly newsletters

See last pages for details.

# The useful hospice: working with physicians

Make their lives easier with 24/7 patient and family educational articles, as well as materials for their own professional development

## “Tell me about a difficult case”

One of the best ways to get a “trial referral” from a new-to-you physician is to ask about a difficult family situation. Search your resources and show them pertinent materials. Ask for the referral as a chance to demonstrate how much you can do to help this family (and the physician) resolve the difficulties.

## Hope and serious illness

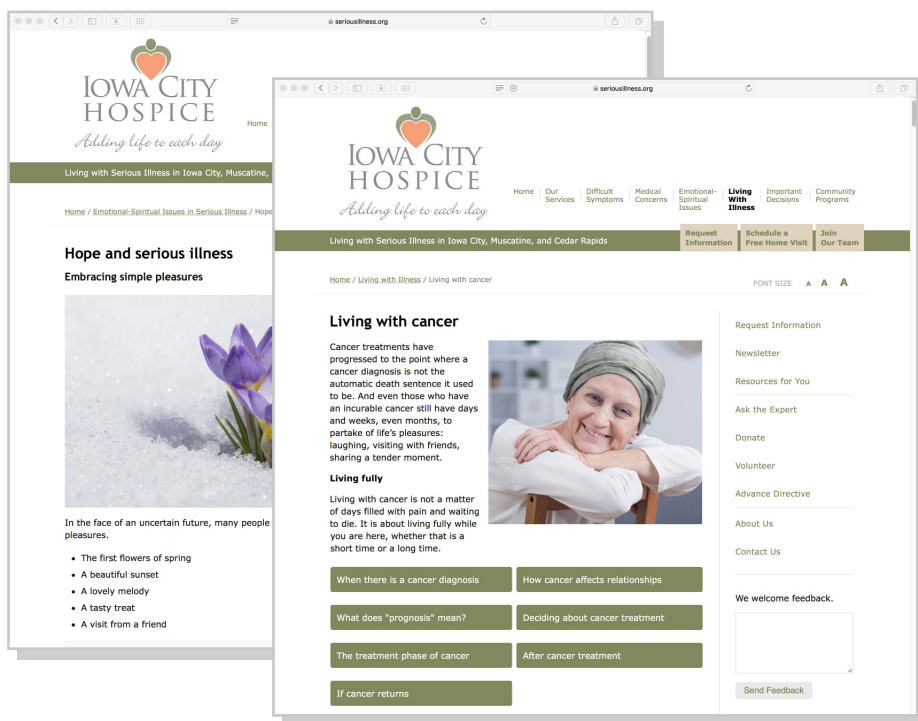
Focus groups with physicians reveal that the main reason they don’t refer earlier to hospice is that they don’t want their patients to “lose hope.” Of course! Everyone needs something to look forward to. Including articles about “hope” and explaining the ways that hope changes with serious illness allows you to share how your hospice can make each day the best it can be.

## The hospice discussion

The dreaded hospice conversation can be made much easier with guidelines to help physicians broach this delicate subject.

## Living with illness

Physicians are focused on treatment. You, however, specialize in the day-to-day living with the disease. From how it impacts eating and mobility, to the emotional and spiritual toll on the patient and family, you can offer insights to help doctors address functional and psychosocial issues that are so critical to quality of life. Create resources you can share with key referring specialists.



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- ☒ Educational handouts
- ☒ Monthly newsletters

See last pages for details.



# The useful hospice: working with discharge planners

## Emphasize resources to help with care transitions

Discharge planners, whether at the hospital or even those at skilled nursing facilities, have care transitions front and center on their mind.

The revolving-door diagnoses that hospice can help:

- Heart failure
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Aspiration pneumonia (often dementia-related)

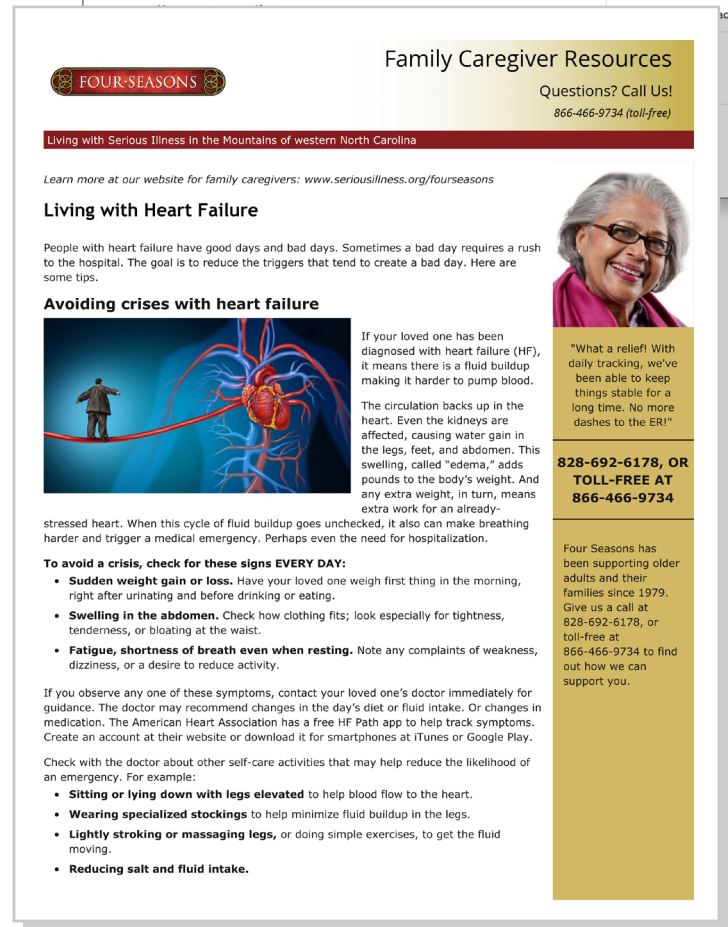
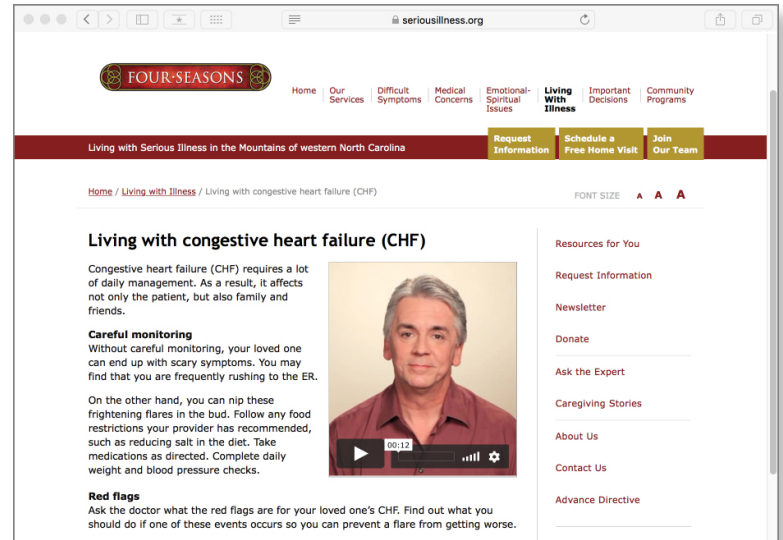
## Create resources to help

Branded with your name, logo, and colors, educational materials spread the word about your hospice while also endearing you to these key referrers:

- A handout about making the transition from hospital to home
- Handouts about key conditions and recognizing the signs of a flare
- A monthly newsletter for family caregivers, with a prompt to subscribe to an email version

*"Finally we have something of substance to share. These resources got us through the door."*

— Hospice in Washington



# Become the expert in family caregiving

You are uniquely committed to the patient and family as the unit of care  
Create materials that overtly support family caregivers

Family caregivers are key hospice decision makers. They are the unsung heroes of the eldercare network, providing over \$470 billion worth of services if they were to be paid. Family members are often the continuity of care across all settings.

## Families spend 3.7 years caregiving

Are you going to be around in 3 years? Invest in your future! Those adult daughters and sons just starting to help mom and dad will be hospice decision makers in 3–4 years' time.

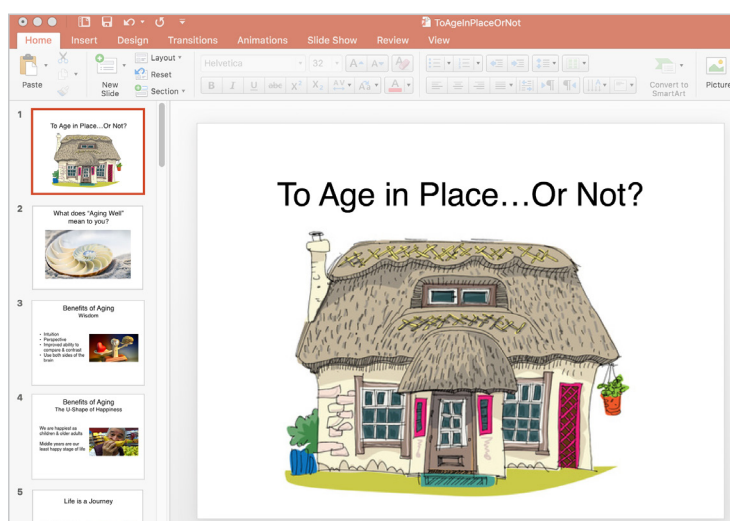
- Provide supportive information earlier in the trajectory and you will build brand loyalty so that you are the go-to hospice when the time comes.

## Community outreach

- Publish a monthly newsletter focusing on caregiving topics earlier in the process.
- Conduct family caregiver support groups, perhaps at local churches.
- Offer family caregiver lunch-and-learns, or evening Family Caregiver Nights at assisted living facilities. They have assembly rooms, a kitchen, and an advertising budget. Plus they love to give tours to the public.
- Connect with Employee Assistance Programs and offer brown bag employee lunch sessions.

## Increase LOS with family self-referrals

A study by Transcend Hospice Marketing revealed that referrals direct from the family resulted in 7–10 days longer ALOS. On average, only 5%–10% of referrals come from families, but some hospices have run campaigns that got that number up to 20%–30%. This is a referral base with little competition and room to grow. Claim this space for your own!



*"We revamped our marketing campaign to become the experts in family caregiving and serious illness. It only makes sense! This way we meet families earlier in the process."*  
— Hospice in Virginia

Let us help you with:

- ☒ PowerPoint presentations with animation
- ☒ Monthly newsletters

See last pages for details.

# Family caregivers: connecting through social media

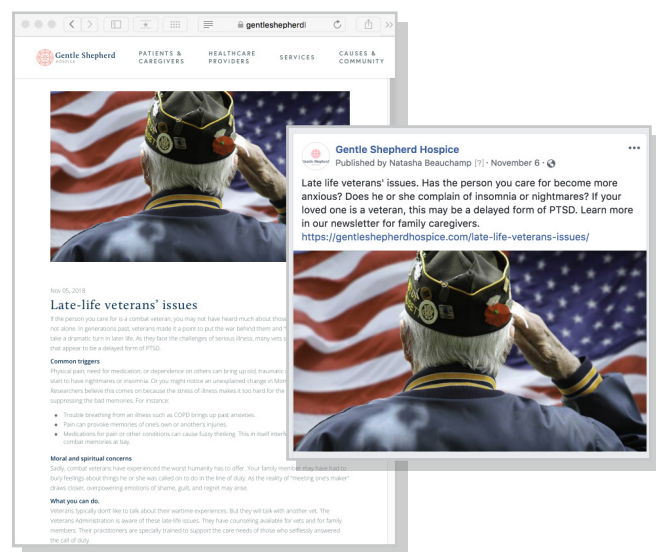
## Project your support of family caregivers with a blog or on Facebook

### A blog for family caregivers

Regular posting of educational information for family caregivers can help you position your hospice as the local expert in family caregiving. Cover articles across the trajectory of illness, not just end of life. A blog also gives others a reason to link to your site, which increases visitors and contributes to your search engine ranking.

### Facebook

Family caregiver demographics are a great match for the demographics of Facebook. Educational posts demonstrate your depth. They can also impress donors and inspire volunteers. Many hospices post educational updates to other websites. Ideally, you want to have a content-rich online presence so all your posts lead back to your brand without a sales pitch.



### The average family caregiver

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the National Alliance for Caregiving, the average family caregiver:

- Is 50 years old and female (adult daughter)
- Is married and employed
- Lives 20 mins. from her mother's house
- Puts in up to 24 hours a week on tasks related to supporting older relatives. (Families of color often support more than one relative!)

They can also be:

- Hospice decision makers
- Donors
- Future volunteers
- Community leaders (clergy, nonprofits, reporters, etc., who themselves may be caring for ailing loved ones)
- Your referrers (who are caregivers in their personal lives)

Let us help you with:

- ☒ Weekly blog articles
- ☒ Weekly or twice-a-week posts on Facebook

See last pages for details.

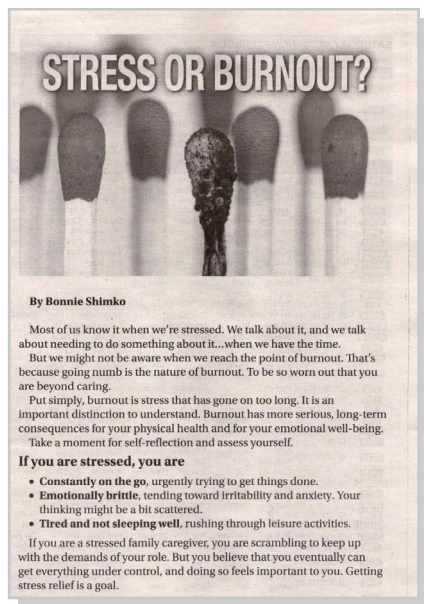
# Family caregivers: Connecting through traditional media

## Seniors still read newspapers, and many family caregivers listen to the radio

Newspapers and radio are hungry for reliable free content. But it has to be newsworthy—something of interest to their readers, not just a substitute for an ad. Since these media also cater to an older clientele, content marketing is an excellent win:win for you both.

### Write a newspaper column

A weekly column for family caregivers—in print and/or online—gives the newspaper a niche and offers you a venue to make the point that you are the experts in family caregiving.



### Appear on local talk radio shows

Talk radio is another medium looking for knowledgeable speakers. And they are often targeting your same demographic of midlife and older adult listeners.

- Prepare a theme for the interview —dealing with family, preventing falls, caregiver stress and burnout. Give the host 5–6 questions

as prompts, but be ready to answer call-in questions as well. Regularly direct callers to your online educational resources.

- “The Family Caregiver Hour” Set up a regular time to appear on the show (e.g., the fourth Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.). Talk show hosts love having a guest they can rely upon.

### Become a reporter’s BFF

Reporters work on a deadline and often need a quick response from a reliable local authority that they can quote. This quote is free publicity for you. You want them to call you for insight and comments about topics related to family caregiving, not just death and dying.

- Research who is on the senior or health “beat.” Follow their articles. Send kudos about articles well done.
- Earn their trust. Send article suggestions and resources that are not self-serving (i.e., *not* about your company).
- Follow them on Twitter, a common medium for reporters to quickly ask for help. Respond promptly and you can indeed become their BFF for eldercare attributions.

Let us help you with:

- ☒ Weekly newspaper articles
- ☒ Content-rich websites

See last pages for details.



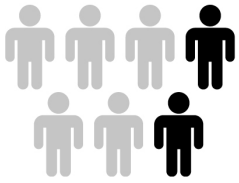
# Palliative Care: more than “not hospice”

## Give your palliative care program its own identity

Confusion about palliative care is rampant! A study by Transcend Hospice Marketing found that *50% of doctors don't know the difference between palliative care and hospice.*

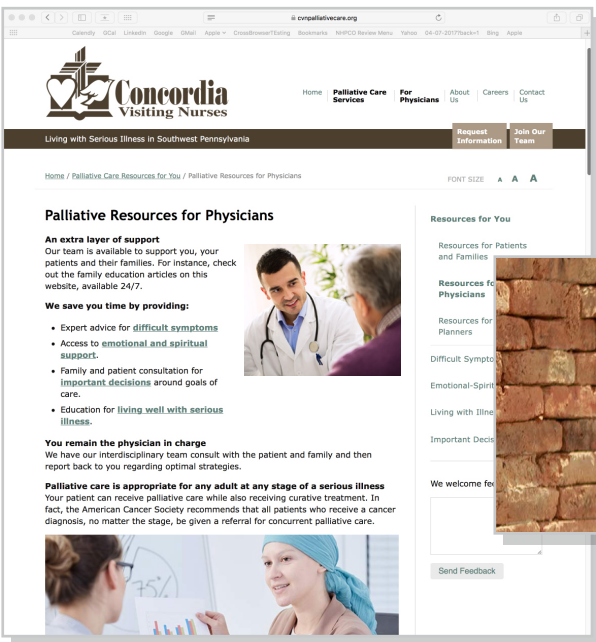
### Separate your program from hospice

On your palliative care materials, remove *all* reference to and association with death. MC Anderson went so far as to rebrand and change the name of its palliative care program to “Supportive Care,” with great results!



“41% increase in referrals”

Gain in referrals when MC Anderson changed its name from “Palliative Care” to “Supportive Care”



### Describing your program

According to the Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) it is counterproductive to describe your program by comparing it with hospice. The two still get conflated. Instead, describe your palliative care service in its own right.

- Relief from symptoms, pain, and stress caused by **serious illness**. No frail, withered hands associated with the dying. Show patients with needs, but in better health and more active than is shown in the typical hospice photo.
- Can be provided **together with curative care**. Show photos of people in active treatment (e.g., bald head from chemo).
- Is appropriate for **any age and any stage**. Show photos of young and middle-aged patients.
- Provides a team of specialists who serve as consultants, an **extra layer of support for the existing physician**.



Available at  
any age and  
any stage

# Reaching donors, volunteers and prospective employees

## Content marketing to solve other challenges

### Keeping donors engaged

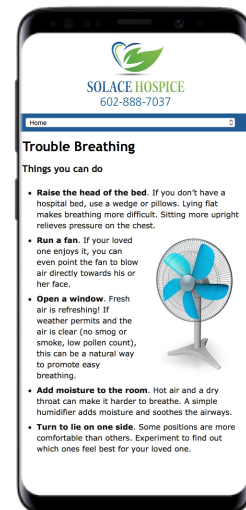
- Give your donors a subscription to your e-newsletter for family caregivers. It costs nothing to send and is a monthly reminder of how much you do with donor dollars to support families. (Many donors were or still are family caregivers.) You can also weave into the content articles with periodic appeals for donations.
- In addition to highlighting events, demonstrate your value to the community—and to family caregivers—with educational Facebook posts.

### Volunteer training and retention

- Send an educational newsletter each month to help volunteers feel connected.
- Use your monthly newsletter for family caregivers as a training tool for volunteers. They are on the frontline, dealing with families and family concerns all the time.

### Attracting and retaining quality staff

- Showcase your commitment to your employees by highlighting a Caregiver of the Month in your monthly newsletter.
- Support continuous learning by giving staff your e-newsletter for families.
- Provide mobile support in the field with educational articles available online in a content-rich website.
- Beyond job listings on Facebook and your LinkedIn company page, express your commitment to learning and quality care by posting educational updates. (59% of applicants will check out your social media presence to evaluate your company spirit and effective use of technology.)



## You receive an area exclusive!

None of your local competitors can license our resources.

See if your market is still available. Go to **Elderpagesonline.com**



# Newsletter Strategies

Fresh topics each month, plus the power of the archives

## Print version of newsletter

- Leave it in the brochure rack of referrers (an excuse to visit each month!).
- Pair it with a content-marketing brochure to create a family caregiver packet for referrers.
- Hand it out at health fairs or support groups.
- Include it in your admission packets and packets for prospective patients.
- Create handouts on special themes using articles from the archives (e.g., pain management, heart failure, making the transition from home to hospital).

## Online version of newsletter

- Drive traffic to your brand by posting social media updates that link to the newsletter.
- Search the newsletter website during a face-to-face meeting with a prospective referrer to find helpful articles about a difficult patient situation. Draw upon the 10+ years of past issues.
- Include links to the online newsletter page in the signature of employee emails.
- Invite referrers to guest author an article.

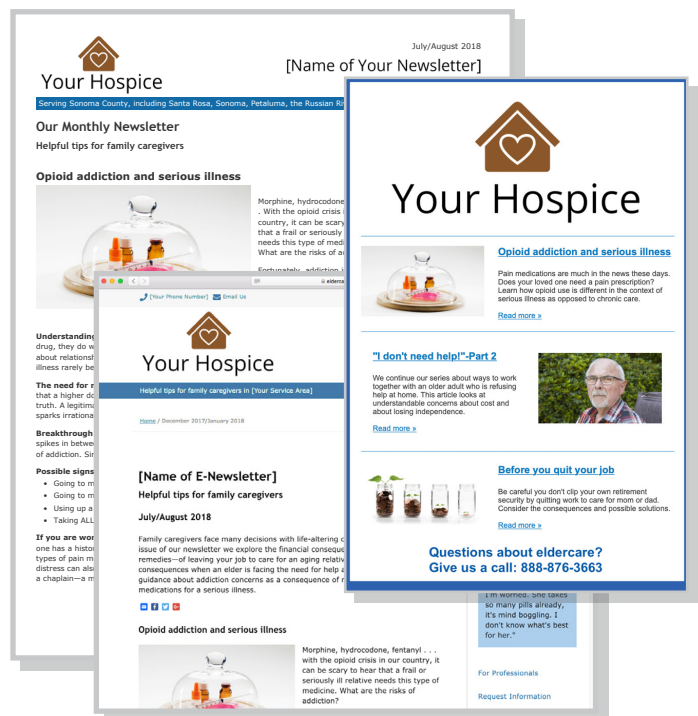
## Publish in the local newspaper

Depending on the circulation, consider publishing a weekly family caregiver column.

## Email version of newsletter

- Collect the name and email address of callers and offer to send them the e-newsletter.
- Have presentation attendees “sign in” with their name and email address. Stay connected into the future by sending them an email newsletter once a month.

*“For three years I’ve been wanting to write a newsletter. In three weeks, I not only got a newsletter, but a 10-year archive of past issues.”*



Find out if your area exclusive is available:  
<https://elderpagesonline.com>

# Weekly Posting on Social Media

## Best uses of blogging, Facebook, and LinkedIn

### A family caregiver blog

Weekly blogposts allow you to demonstrate your expertise and build content worth linking to. A focus on end-of-life issues will narrow your audience. A focus on family caregiver issues across the trajectory of illness provides you with an upstream entry point and time to build brand loyalty.

- Post regularly. An abandoned blog hurts you more than it helps.
- Cover a wide range of topics to showcase your expertise.
- Link to your blogposts when answering questions in emails or on listserves.
- Post LinkedIn or Facebook status updates about your blogposts.

### LinkedIn

With staff shortages—and as competition intensifies for dedicated employees—you need to develop an “employer brand.” To stand out as an “employer of choice,” your page needs more than appeals for resumes. By regularly posting educational content, you send a signal of professionalism and caring that appeals to high-quality applicants looking for a career, not just a job.

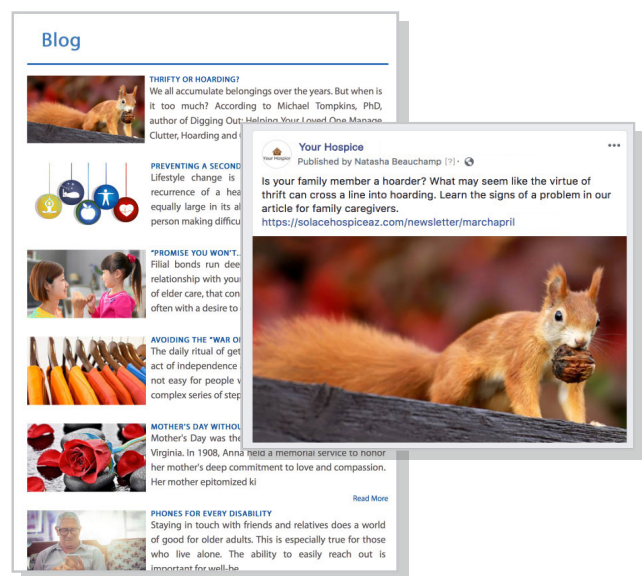
- Share educational updates weekly, linking them to your own website blog.
- Include engaging graphics and video to gain attention and spark interest.

### Facebook

While family caregivers may follow you on Facebook, you also have the opportunity to reach potential employees. (Nearly 60% of millennial applicants check your Facebook page to assess your team spirit.) Potential donors and volunteers are other key Facebook followers.

- Showcase your commitment to education with weekly updates that drive people back to your blog.
- Provide videos for increased attention.

*"If time gets tight, at least I know we have one entry a week we can count on. Better than that, it leads back to our brand!"*



Find out if your area exclusive is available:  
<https://elderpagesonline.com>



# Leveraging a Content-Rich Website

Showcase your expertise as the local expert in family caregiving.

## A content-rich website

Distinguish yourself from your competitors with a content-rich resource section of your website that covers topics of concern to family caregivers.

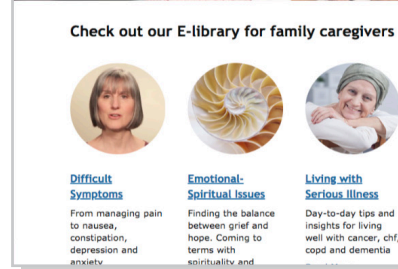
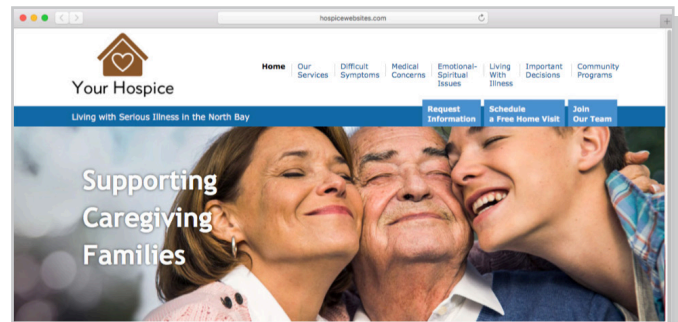
- Create a trifold brochure about your resources for referrers to hand out. Include the brochure in your admission packets.
- Post weekly educational updates on social media that send people to specific pages on your website (hope, advance directives...)

*"Now we are more than the expert in death and dying. We are the experts in family caregiving and serious illness. That makes it much easier for families to visit our site."*

## Create a companion e-library site

A standalone e-library website can open doors that are ordinarily closed to your commercial presence. If you need to reach the "pre-hospice" audience, create a sister site at [seriousillness.org/\[YourCommunity\]](http://seriousillness.org/[YourCommunity]). Promote this as your "gift" to family caregivers.

- Shamelessly promote your 24/7 educational resources for families.
- Send out a press release in November that unveils your e-library during National Family Caregivers Month.
- Encourage the press to refer to your educational URL whenever they run a story about family caregiving.



Find out if your area exclusive is available:  
<https://elderpagesonline.com>

# Putting It All Together

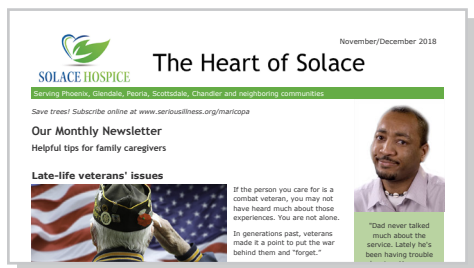
## Our social media and family outreach services



From weekly blog posts to monthly newsletters, let us do the writing so you are liberated to do those things only you can do. License one product and leverage the others as low-cost add-ons. Plus you receive an area exclusive. None of your local competitors can license our content.

*"I can't tell you what a relief it's been to have you take over our blog. I no longer need to worry about it and feel guilty."*

### Print Newsletter



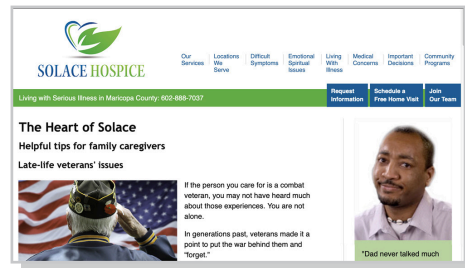
Once a month, you receive a branded, ready-to-print .pdf file with three fresh articles.

### Email Newsletter



We create and send out a monthly email. All you do is gather subscribers.

### Online Newsletter



Edit in the cloud and link to your branded resource. Includes a 10+ year archive of past issues.

### Your Website Blog



Every week we post a new 300-word article on your website.

### Facebook Posts



You choose between once-a-week or twice-a-week status updates that include a link back to your brand.

### Weekly Newspaper Blog



You can license the publishing rights to syndicate a weekly family caregiver column in your local newspaper: online or in print.

See if your market is still available. Go to [Elderpagesonline.com](http://Elderpagesonline.com)



# Putting It All Together

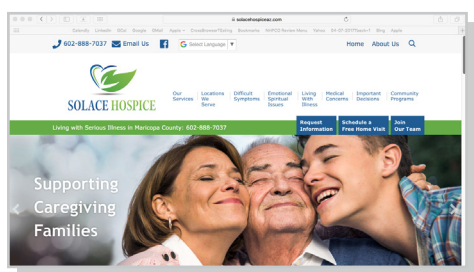
## A website and integrated campaign



Create a presence with consistent branding across all your online, print, and presentation materials. In one fell swoop, you move upstream and become THE local expert in family caregiving and serious illness.

*"Working with you was quick and easy (and fun!). I was really impressed at how smoothly it all came together. You are an excellent teacher. Plus, your products make us shine."*

### E-Library



Over 30 pages of educational information for family caregivers:

- Difficult symptoms
- Emotional-spiritual issues
- Living with illness
- Important decisions

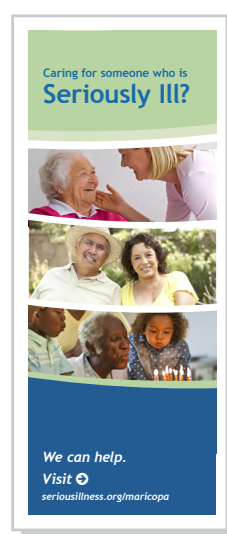
### Educational Handouts



Support your monthly themes or community presentations with branded handouts on a single subject:

- Living with heart failure
- Care transitions
- Health care planning
- Pain management

### Brochure



A branded .pdf file so you can print your own brochure featuring your educational resources.

## You receive an area exclusive!

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