

Healthcare at Halloween 2022: **Trickery and Treats**

Market Corner Commentary
October 27, 2022

By David W. Johnson



It's that spooky time of year when kids don costumes and go trick or treating. Most love Halloween for its treats. It's the trickery, however, that gives Halloween its spice and sense of menace. Good and evil intermix. It's a wicked time for all.

Halloween is an apt metaphor for healthcare as its delights and dangers shape consumer experience. Healthcare's treats create value, bring joy and enrich lives. Its trickery triggers waste, creates confusion, restricts access and inflicts pain.

This Halloween, the healthcare landscape is full of both tricks and treats. We've canvassed our network and assembled lists of our top five healthcare tricks and treats. Avoid [rainbow fentanyl](#), this year's candy scare, as you ingest our findings. Let us know if agree, disagree or want to put a dagger in our heart.

FIRST, THE TREATS

Let's start with the delicious TREATS!

1

The opening of the national "988" suicide and crisis hotline is [getting traction](#). 24/7 access through a well-defined channel is saving lives.

2

Over half of Providence's MyChart users (and more every day) now manage their healthcare experiences through PSJH's customer-friendly app just like they do with Marriot hotels and American Airlines. No health system should rely on third-party EMRs to manage their customers' user experience.

3

The Biden administration's decision to extend the public health emergency means that millions of low-income Americans won't lose their Medicaid health insurance. It's not a permanent solution but does maintain care access near term.



4

Once the Advocate-Aurora and Atrium merger closes, the new Advocate plans to open the Institute for Health Equity in Milwaukee. Expanding vital primary-care access to low-income urban and rural communities has never been more needed.

5

In partnership with the Alice Walton-funded Whole Health Institute, a [transformational health system](#) is emerging in Northwest Arkansas. The new regional health system will deliver comprehensive high-quality, whole-person services across the care continuum.

THEN THE TRICKS

Now that you're sugared up, let's identify those notorious TRICKS!

1

What the AI is going on here? I've seen at least ten different words used for the "A" in AI. They include Artificial, Autonomous, Algorithmic, Ambient, Augmented, Amplified, Adjacent, Adaptive and Aligned. No more trickery. At the end of the day, it's all just intelligence and there are two kinds: human and machine. Human-machine collaboration will shape healthcare's future.

3

The Medicare Trust Fund is going bankrupt and nobody is talking or doing anything about it.

2

Under severe financial pressure, too many health systems are doubling down on the hospital-centric business model to maximize revenues. As this unfolds, we may be witnessing the collapse of the traditional nonprofit healthcare business model.

4

The American Medical Association is actively fighting what it terms "[scope of practice creep](#)" in state legislatures throughout the country, reversing gains achieved during the pandemic. Present meet the past.





5

Almost all of the large Medicare Advantage plans stand accused of fraud and/or overbilling by government agencies or whistleblowers. More energy goes into risk scoring than care management.

It's not yet clear whether the new Alzheimer's drug manufactured by Biogen and Eisai will be trickery or a treat. It slowed cognitive decline marginally in a late-stage trial. That's fantastic, but a monumental price tag for modest improvement is almost certain if the FDA approves the drug. Trick or Treat? Time will tell.

Now, it's time to walk by a cemetery. Happy Halloween!

AUTHOR



David "Dracula" Johnson is the CEO of 4sight Health, a thought leadership and advisory company working at the intersection of strategy, economics, innovation and capital formation. Dave wakes up every morning trying to fix America's broken healthcare system. Prior to founding 4sight Health in 2014, Dave had a long and successful career in healthcare investment banking. He is a graduate of Colgate University and earned a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School. Employing his knowledge and experience in health policy, economics, statistics, behavioral finance, disruptive innovation, organizational change and complexity theory, Dave writes and speaks on pro-market healthcare reform. His first book *Market vs. Medicine: America's Epic Fight for Better, Affordable Healthcare*, and his second book, *The Customer Revolution in Healthcare: Delivering Kinder, Smarter, Affordable Care for All* (McGraw-Hill 2019), are available for purchase on www.4sighthealth.com. His third book, *Less Healthcare, More Health: The Prescription for a Happier, More Equitable and Productive America*, will publish in 2024.