

Cordt Kassner

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<subscriptions@hospicepalliativecaretoday.com>
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December 3rd, 2023

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Hospice Provider News

[Report indicates fewer Vermonters opting for hospice care](#)

WCAX-TV (Burlington, VT)

November 29, 2023

Burlington, VT—Many Vermonters with terminal illnesses aren’t taking advantage of a benefit that some medical professionals say could improve their end-of-life care. A new report this month from the Vermont Department of Health found the percentage of people using hospice has actually gone down after it had risen steadily for many years.

[Tomah Organizations Share \\$4+ Million Bequest](#)

News Release

November 28, 2023

Tomah, WI—Tomah Health, the Tomah Health Hospice Touch & Palliative Care program, the Tomah Public Library and Chasing Daylight Animal Shelter will share just over a \$4 million gift commitment from a trust created by John and Velda Felton of Tomah and formerly of Warrens.

[Friendtique Reaches \\$1.3 million in lifetime donations to Ohio’s Hospice LifeCare](#)

Daily Record (Wooster, OH)

November 30, 2023

Wooster, OH—Ohio’s Hospice LifeCare recently received a donation of \$25,000 from Friendtique, a local boutique resale shop. Friendtique’s gift marks a milestone of \$1.3 million in lifetime donations to the Ohio’s Hospice LifeCare Community Care Fund.

[Hospice Savannah gives patients ornaments to record final messages from loved ones](#)

WSAV-TV (Savannah, GA)

November 30, 2023

Savannah, GA—It’s the gift that keeps giving. Holiday Voices is the only keepsake recordable ornament on the market. Each year owner Savannah Kelly donates boxes of the ornaments for patients to record a final message on for their loved ones to have.

[Hospice Clinician Wages Rising at Slower Rate; Turnover Falling](#)

Hospice News

December 1, 2023

Wages for hospice clinicians continue to go up amid widespread staff shortages, but they grew at a slower rate in 2023 compared to the prior year. The national average hourly rate for Hospice registered nurses rose 4.58% in 2023, down from a 5.95% increase in 2022, according to a new report by the Hospital & Healthcare Compensation Service in cooperation with the National Association for Home Care & Hospice. Meanwhile, turnover rates declined in 2023, representing the first drop in several years, the report indicated.

Palliative Care Provider News

[Lack of Awareness Challenging Palliative Care’s Plight in the Hospice VBIID Landscape](#)

Palliative Care News

December 1, 2023

A main barrier to palliative care growth in the Medicare Advantage hospice carve-in is a lack of understanding of these services among beneficiaries, as well as inconsistent service delivery.

[UT Medical Center expanding palliative and hospice care in rural communities](#)

WVLT-TV (Knoxville, TN)

November 30, 2023

Knoxville, TN—November marks National Palliative and Hospice Care Month, two types of treatment that the University of Tennessee Medical Center's Dr. Adam Tyson is passionate about. Now, the hospital is working to expand that care into other communities.

Clinical News

[This grief therapist draws on her own experience with loss to help others](#)

Orange County Register

November 30, 2023

Claire Bidwell Smith is no stranger to grief. She lost both of her parents to cancer at a young age—her mother when she was 18, and her father when she was 25. "I entered into my adult life with a lot of grief and was just trying to figure out everything that had happened to me. After my mom died, everybody was like 'You'll be fine. You're an adult, just go forward into your life.' And I wasn't fine. It was really, really hard." ... Based in Santa Monica, Smith initially worked in hospice before starting a private practice as a grief therapist, now facilitating online grief support groups and in-person retreats. And she never stopped writing. Smith has published three nonfiction books about grief; her new book, "Conscious Grieving," comes out in March 2024.

[Together, New England College and hospitals aim to tackle nursing vacancies](#)

New Hampshire Bulletin

December 1, 2023

The state's health care industry had to get creative after the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing workforce shortages, doubling the vacancy rate for nurses and LNAs between 2019 and 2022, according to the New Hampshire Hospital Association. Employers offered generous signing bonuses and paid training. The state made it easier for out-of-state practitioners to get a New Hampshire license. A team of health care leaders developed 107 strategies to recruit and retain workers.

[Connecticut's nursing shortage is all about pay rates](#)

By Latoya Hall, RN, and Heather Massicotte, RN

CT Mirror

December 1, 2023

Like many other states across the United States, Connecticut is grappling with a severe shortage of nurses. Personally, we have both seen nurses leaving the bedside at alarming rates to find jobs in other states and even outside of healthcare. We are not alone in this observation. As dedicated healthcare professionals, we are proud to provide essential care to patients, but the financial strain is undeniable.

[Editor's Note: Both authors are candidates in the Doctor of Nursing Practice-Family Nurse Practitioner program at Sacred Heart University's College of Nursing, Fairfield, CT.]

[High prices plague medical marijuana market in Virginia](#)

WRIC-TV (Richmond, VA)

November 29, 2023

Richmond, VA—A new report is shedding light on the state of the medical marijuana industry in Virginia. The report found that because of high prices, fewer Virginians obtain medical cannabis through the state's regulated market, compared to other states. ... The high cost means 90% of patients in Virginia obtain cannabis from sources other than Virginia's medical market.

Regulatory News

[Hospices Seek Special Focus CONs to Reach Underserved Populations](#)

Hospice News

December 1, 2023

Some states with certificate of need regulations have special focus policies that allow hospice providers to expand services among underserved communities. But navigating these CON processes can be a challenge. ... A difficulty in seeking these types of special focus CONs is proving an unmet need among specific populations, according to André Lee, co-founder and administrator of Nashville-based Heart'n Soul Hospice.

M&A News

[Medical City Healthcare buys Wise Health System, increasing D-FW footprint](#)

Dallas Morning News

December 1, 2023

Dallas-based Medical City Healthcare has again expanded in North Texas with the purchase of Wise Health System, bringing the health system giant to 19 in-patient hospitals. Medical City, a division of HCA Healthcare in Nashville, announced the acquisition Friday, nearly a year after word surfaced of discussions with the Decatur, Texas-based hospital system.

[Walmart Reportedly Interested In Reviving Humana Deal Talks](#)

Home Health Care News

December 1, 2023

Humana Inc. remained in the headlines Friday, this time after being linked to Walmart in potential deal talks.

[Principles Underlying Optum's Home-Based Care Deals](#)

Hospice News

November 29, 2023

Optum Health's home-based care acquisitions are designed to support an overarching goal of expanding value-based care and diversifying clinical capabilities. The UnitedHealth Group subsidiary in June penned an agreement to acquire Amedisys in an all-cash transaction of \$101 per share, or about \$3.3 billion. This followed its \$5.4 billion acquisition of LHC Group, which closed in February. Company-wide, value-based care is a driving force behind UnitedHealth Group's growth strategy, according to the company's CEO, Andrew Witty. To further expand this model, the company will need to leverage scale and an expanded suite of services within its health care and insurance businesses. ... UnitedHealth Group is positioning Optum as a cornerstone of its growing home-based care infrastructure and expansion of value-based service delivery.

[The Pennant Group Buys Southwestern Palliative Care & Hospice](#)

Hospice News

December 1, 2023

The Pennant Group Inc. has inked a deal to acquire Arizona-based Southwestern Palliative Care & Hospice for an undisclosed amount, adding to its existing presence in the state. Southwestern Palliative Care & Hospice provides home-based end-of-life and serious illness care to communities in Yuma, Arizona.

[Editor's Note: To read The Pennant Group news release, click [here](#).]

[InnovAge Acquires ConcertoCare PACE Programs](#)

Home Health Care News

December 1, 2023

InnovAge (Nasdaq: INNV), one of the largest providers of the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) model, is expanding its footprint even further. On Friday, InnovAge announced it is acquiring two PACE programs in California from ConcertoCare, which is also a provider of home care and home-based primary care.

[Editor's Note: To read the InnovAge news release, click [here](#).]

[Community Health Systems sells three Florida hospitals for \\$294M](#)

Modern Healthcare

December 1, 2023

Community Health Systems sold three Florida hospitals to Tampa General Hospital in a \$294 million cash deal that closed Friday, the for-profit health system announced. The transaction involves the 120-bed Bravera Health Brooksville in Brooksville, the 128-bed Bravera Health Seven Rivers in Crystal River and the 124-bed Bravera Health Spring Hill in Spring Hill, in addition to clinics and outpatient services.

Post-Acute Care News

[New doctors just aren't that interested in geriatrics](#)

Axios

December 1, 2023

Doctors specializing in care for older adults are increasingly in demand as the country ages—but America's newer physicians aren't that interested in geriatric medicine. ... Less than half of 348 post-residency fellowships for geriatric internal medicine filled up in the initial matching process this year, according to new data from the National Resident Matching Program, the nonprofit that oversees placement of physicians in training. The fill rate was even lower for geriatric family medicine fellowships.

[It's your funeral—Here's how to plan so your loved ones don't have to](#)

Union Democrat (Sonora, CA)

November 28, 2023

Just 10% of people have told a funeral home in writing what their funeral plans are, according to NFDA surveys, and an even smaller share have pre-paid for their arrangements. So whether you are pre-planning your own funeral—as experts highly recommend by either talking with a funeral home or including it within your estate planning—or helping with a loved one's arrangements, here are a few basics to start the conversation...

[Nursing Homes' Letter to CMS Calls Out Lack of Teeth—and Clarity—in Final Rule's Medicare Advantage Reform](#)

Skilled Nursing News

December 1, 2023

In order to keep Medicare Advantage plans in check for denial of services, provider organizations are pressuring federal authorities to do more, and asking them to closely monitor and aggressively enforce reforms for these plans as envisioned in a final rule that takes effect on Jan. 1. Companies managing MA plans have said they don't believe they need to do anything different, based on what was laid out in the final rule, a worrying concern that needs to be addressed, providers said, who are also seeking to gain clarity on how the Center for Medicare & Medicaid will monitor MA plans' compliance. To that end, nursing home and hospital associations are seeking to influence the implementation of CMS's rule regarding MA plans.

Northwell's operating income drops \$104M in Q3

Becker's Hospital CFO Report

November 30, 2023

New Hyde Park, N.Y.-based Northwell Health reported a \$103.9 million drop in operating income in the third quarter, from a \$92.4 million gain in the third quarter of 2022 to an \$11.6 million loss in the third quarter of this year, according to financial documents published Nov. 29. Revenue increased 5.8% year over year to \$4.1 billion while expenses increased 8.6% to \$4.2 billion.

Nursing Home Occupancy 'Disappointingly Flat' in November but States' Medicaid Rebasing Encouraging

Skilled Nursing News

December 1, 2023

Healthcare Real Estate Investment Trusts specializing in post-acute care facilities experienced “disappointingly flat” occupancy rates in November, according to investment analysts. BMO Capital Market’s Juan Sanabria highlighted the challenges faced by skilled nursing facilities in maintaining growth, with market share loss to home health. ... In terms of REIT exposure and risks, the note pointed out that SNF coverage appeared to have bottomed out as occupancy and labor availability had improved. This trend is evident from recent quarterly earnings from several large publicly- traded REITs.

Humana Partners With CINQCARE To Deliver Home-Based Care To Medicare Advantage Members

Home Health Care News

November 30, 2023

Humana Inc. has formed a partnership with CINQCARE, a health care company that delivers care in the home and community. ... As part of the collaboration, the companies will serve Humana’s New York Medicare Advantage members in their homes.

'Plain old greed'—HCA nurses rally to denounce understaffing, unsafe conditions at hospitals

Florida Phoenix

November 30, 2023

Judy Preuss, an ICU nurse at HCA Florida Oak Hill Hospital, joined the National Nurses Organizing Committee 13 years ago for the same reason she rallied Thursday afternoon in Tampa with colleagues from other parts of the country: Bargaining to fix understaffing. Oak Hill Hospital, where Preuss has worked for 18 years, is one of HCA Healthcare’s 46 hospitals in Florida. The nurses from the union representing 10,000 registered nurses across the U.S. held a rally at the HCA West Florida Division Office in Tampa.

Today's 10-Second Question

What's one way your volunteers make a difference in your patient's lives? Share responses [here](#). Responses shared tomorrow.

Yesterday's Question: How have you used AI this week?

Responses included: To aggregate / prioritize multiple media articles.

Today's Encouragement

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

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