

## Cordt Kassner

---

**From:** Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter  
<subscriptions@hospicepalliativecaretoday.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 15, 2023 4:00 AM  
**To:** Cordt Kassner  
**Subject:** Your Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter for 12/15/23



## HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE TODAY

OUR SPONSORS

[Teleios Collaborative Network](#)

[Hospice Analytics](#)

December 15th, 2023

### Contents

1. [2023 NHPCO Facts and Figures Report Now Available](#)
2. [Memory Care Gap—GAO Report Shows Less than 2.5% of Medicare Beneficiaries with Alzheimer’s Receive Cognitive Assessment](#)
3. [Telehealth use among seniors back up to pandemic-era highs, one company claims](#)
4. [What health systems did this year to recruit, retain workers](#)
5. [VITAS Healthcare Expands Hospital-Based Inpatient Hospice Center](#)
6. [Gentiva Opens De Novo in Tennessee](#)
7. [Caring through the end](#)
8. [Home Health & Hospice Care Reopens Renovated Inpatient Center](#)
9. [Contessa’s Lessons Learned on Risk-Based Palliative Care](#)
10. [Demand for nurses continues to eclipse supply—report](#)
11. [Helping hands in hospice](#)
12. [Tending a Garden May Help Lessen Grief](#)
13. [Phones ‘connected to nothing but love’ donated to Westport Library](#)
14. [Medicare Advantage market got more competitive in 2022—AMA.](#)
15. [Rumored Help at Home sale ‘par for the course’ of PE ownership, expert says](#)
16. [31 positions eliminated as St. Mary’s lays off employees, cuts hours for some amid financial woes](#)
17. [Nursing Home and CCRC Spending Grew 5.6% to \\$191.3B in 2022—After Dropping 7.8% in 2021](#)
18. [Occupancy on way to 10th consecutive quarter of growth](#)

19. [Home Health Spending Begins To Climb Again Post-Pandemic](#)
20. [Plains hospital ends home health services](#)
21. [Patient data compromised in October cyberattack on HealthAlliance Hospital](#)
22. [Washington, D.C., Needs to Address Hospice Care Utilization Disparities](#)
23. [New documentary revisits Terri Schiavo case](#)
24. [22 states to increase minimum wage on Jan. 1](#)
25. [Boston VNA Nurses and Healthcare Professionals Cast a Unanimous Vote Authorizing a 14-day Strike](#)
26. [Nurses at Suburban Community and Lower Bucks Hospital authorize strike amid contract negotiation stalemate](#)
27. [Licensed practical nurses petition to oust union at Mayo Clinic's Austin hospital](#)
28. [Today's Encouragement: "Time is an equal opportunity employer"](#)

## Headlines

### [\*\*2023 NHPCO Facts and Figures Report Now Available\*\*](#)

*News Release*

December 13, 2023

Alexandria, VA—The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization has published its 2023 edition of Facts and Figures, an annual report on key data points related to the delivery of hospice care, including information on patient characteristics, location and level of care, Medicare hospice spending, and hospice providers. NHPCO Facts and Figures is the leading resource for hospice providers and others interested in understanding the work of the community.

*Editor's Note: [Click here to access NHPCO's Report](#)*

### [\*\*Memory Care Gap—GAO Report Shows Less than 2.5% of Medicare Beneficiaries with Alzheimer's Receive Cognitive Assessment\*\*](#)

*Senior Housing News*

December 13, 2023

Between 2018 and last year, use of cognitive assessment and care plan services tripled, but few Medicare beneficiaries who qualify received the service, according to a recent study by the Government Accountability Office. The GAO study found that, at most, 2.4% of Medicare beneficiaries with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder received this service.

### [\*\*Telehealth use among seniors back up to pandemic-era highs, one company claims\*\*](#)

*McKnight's Senior Living*

December 13, 2023

Nearly all seniors in the US, an astonishing 97%, had at least one telehealth appointment this year, a new survey indicates. The data, which comes from remote platform operator Independa, indicates that telehealth usage among seniors has grown 20% over the past

three years, nearly back up to the pandemic-era peak, when in-person options were not available.



[\*Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today\*](#)

### **What health systems did this year to recruit, retain workers**

*Modern Healthcare*

December 13, 2023

Tuition reimbursement is a top program offered this year by health systems seeking to recruit and retain employees, according to a recent survey by Aon, an insurer and consulting firm. ... Here are five areas of focus around recruitment and retention this year.

1. Offering better benefits ...
2. Addressing worker burnout ...
3. Increasing compensation ...
4. Creating a staffing pipeline ...
5. Reducing clinician turnover ...

## **Hospice Provider News**

### **VITAS Healthcare Expands Hospital-Based Inpatient Hospice Center**

*Hospice News*

December 13, 2023

Chemed Corp. VITAS Healthcare recently expanded its inpatient hospice care unit at the Florida-based Broward Health Medical Center. The inpatient facility now has 12 patient beds, up from eight prior to the renovations. VITAS expects to serve roughly 550 patients annually at the center.

### **Gentiva Opens De Novo in Tennessee**

*Hospice News*

December 13, 2023

Gentiva has opened a new hospice in Greeneville, Tennessee, the latest move in the company's growth trajectory. The de novo opened earlier this month, and will serve patients, families and facilities across both Greene and Cooke counties in eastern Tennessee. ... Gentiva is a portfolio company of the private equity firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice.



*[Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today](#)*

### **[Caring through the end](#)**

*C-Ville (Charlottesville, VA)*

December 13, 2023

Nancy Littlefield is a fourth-generation nurse, so it's not surprising that she describes caring for people as "my calling." What may be surprising is that her work as an ICU nurse, helping the sick and their families to heal and recover, led her to palliative care, helping the dying and their families through life's last stage. That will be her focus as the new CEO for Hospice of the Piedmont.

### **[Home Health & Hospice Care Reopens Renovated Inpatient Center](#)**

*Hospice News*

December 13, 2023

fMerrimack, NH—Home Health & Hospice Care has reopened its inpatient facility in New Hampshire after expanding with a new addition. The Community Hospice House opened in November and serves patients in Merrimack, New Hampshire. ... All told, the hospice anticipates serving more than 600 patients annually at the center going forward, HHC President and CEO Barbara Lafrance told local news.

## **Palliative Care Provider News**

### **[Contessa's Lessons Learned on Risk-Based Palliative Care](#)**

*Palliative Care News*

December 13, 2023

As Contessa Health pioneers a growing value-based palliative care-at-home program, they've encountered some learning curves when it comes to operating within a new payment system. Contessa is a subsidiary of Amedisys, which the home health and hospice provider acquired in 2021 for \$250 million.

## **Clinical News**

### **[Demand for nurses continues to eclipse supply—report](#)**

*McKnight's Senior Living*

December 14, 2023

Almost three years after the start of the pandemic, a shortage of registered nurses continues to eclipse the supply of qualified professionals. "The US shortage of registered

nurses has been called a crisis. Burnout, staff turnover, a growing and aging baby-boomer population, and a lack of educators have contributed to high demand and undersupply, a longstanding problem aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic,” according to a new report from ADP Research Institute.

### [Helping hands in hospice](#)

*C-Ville (Charlottesville, VA)*

December 13, 2023

Charlottesville, VA—It’s a conversation starter you might throw out with a group of friends hanging out at a winery, or after a large informal family supper: “What would you like to do before you die?” The answers are probably interesting, intriguing, even surprising. The discussion could inspire someone in the group to make those dreams happen. But for Beth Eck, director of end-of-life doula services for Hospice of the Piedmont, the real question is: “Have you said what needs to be said?”

### [Tending a Garden May Help Lessen Grief](#)

*Blog Post*

*Seven Ponds*

December 3, 2023

Tending a garden—planting, tilling, digging, weeding, watering, and growing plants, flowers, or food—could beget us better health and wellness. ... A comprehensive compilation of research by the National Institutes in Health confirms that a regular dose of gardening reduces stress, improves physical health and bolsters our mood. In fact, gardening was shown to positively alter electrical activity in the brain. So it stands to reason that tending a garden could positively impact those who are grieving a loss. ... Reviving a garden that once belonged to a loved one may also soothe a grieving soul.

### [Phones ‘connected to nothing but love’ donated to Westport Library](#)

*Westport (CT) Journal*

December 13, 2023

Westport, CT—Lynda Shannon Bluestein is nearing the end of her life. In January, the 76-year-old will travel to Vermont where, surrounded by family, she will end the suffering she has experienced from three bouts of cancer in a state where aid-in-dying is permitted. Bluestein, however, first had to sue the state of Vermont, winning her case in June, to allow a non-resident to end her life there. On Wednesday, she plans to give the Westport Library a gift that may help others, especially children, express and process grief when they lose a loved one. Bluestein will donate two “wind phon es”—rotary-dial phones that are not connected to anything—that people of all ages can use to speak about their loss and memories of a loved one who has passed away.

## **Regulatory News**

## [Medicare Advantage market got more competitive in 2022—AMA.](#)

*Modern Healthcare*

December 12, 2023

The majority of the nation's health insurance markets remain highly concentrated, but one segment of the industry in particular continues to grow more competitive—Medicare Advantage. The Medicare Advantage market has decreased in concentration since 2017 and continued to do so in 2022, according to the American Medical Association's annual report Tuesday on health insurers.

## **Mergers & Aquisition News**

### [Rumored Help at Home sale 'par for the course' of PE ownership, expert says](#)

*McKnight's Home Care Daily*

December 14, 2023

Three years after it was bought by private equity firms Centerbridge Partners and the Vistria Group, Help at Home could be exploring a possible transaction in what experts have called an unsurprising move. On Tuesday, Bloomberg reported that Vistria Group and Centerbridge Partners were "gauging interest" in a transaction involving Help at Home.

## **Post-Acute Care News**

### [31 positions eliminated as St. Mary's lays off employees, cuts hours for some amid financial woes](#)

*Portland (ME) Press Herald*

December 12, 2023

Lewiston, ME—St. Mary's Healthcare System laid off at least 31 employees effective Monday, according to St. Mary's news release. ... The decision comes as the hospital system has sustained operating losses over the last five years, according to the press release.

### [Nursing Home and CCRC Spending Grew 5.6% to \\$191.3B in 2022—After Dropping 7.8% in 2021](#)

*Skilled Nursing News*

December 13, 2023

Nursing homes and continuing care retirement communities made up \$191.3 billion of national health expenditures in 2022, an increase from \$181.1 billion in 2021, reaching levels close to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Pre-pandemic, such expenditures sat between \$162 billion and \$174.1 billion between 2016 and 2019, according to a survey published by *Health Affairs*.

### [Occupancy on way to 10th consecutive quarter of growth](#)

*McKnight's Senior Living*

December 14, 2023

Senior living occupancy is on its way to 10 consecutive quarters of positive growth,

according to NIC MAP Vision’s November intra-quarterly snapshot report. The positive growth trend in senior living—independent living and assisted living combined—marks the longest period of uninterrupted gains since the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care and NIC MAP Vision began reporting data in 2005, Omar Zahraoui, principal at NIC, wrote in a blog.

### [Home Health Spending Begins To Climb Again Post-Pandemic](#)

*Home Health Care News*

December 13, 2023

After stalling in 2021, spending on home health care returned to a more normalized growth rate in 2022, according to a new analysis from the Office of the Actuary at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Specifically, national health expenditures on home health care increased by 6% to \$132.9 billion in 2022.

### [Plains hospital ends home health services](#)

*Clark Fork Valley Press (Plains, MT)*

December 13, 2023

Plains, MT—Clark Fork Valley Hospital will close its Medicare certified home health agency at the end of the year. According to a press release from the hospital, hospice services will not be affected and will continue unchanged. Hospital officials cited ongoing labor shortages, financial losses and regulatory burdens of operating Home Health organizations as reasons for the closure.

## **Technology / Innovations News**

### [Patient data compromised in October cyberattack on HealthAlliance Hospital](#)

*Times Union (Albany, NY)*

December 12, 2023

Kingston, NY—The October cyberattack that hit two hospitals in the Hudson Valley gave hackers unauthorized access to sensitive patient data for nearly two months, hospital officials said Monday night, including names, addresses, Social Security numbers, lab results and financial information.

## **General News**

### [Washington, D.C., Needs to Address Hospice Care Utilization Disparities](#)

*By Donna Gayles and Audrey Easaw*

*Washington (DC) Informer*

December 13, 2023

Our nation’s capital ranks high in many things, from access to outdoor activities and number of museums to its ethnic and cultural diversity and vibrant LGBTQ+ population. But the city lags far behind in one key area: hospice care utilization. While on average, just under half of Medicare decedents are in hospice care at their time of death, in the District

of Columbia, only 25% are—ranking lower than 49 of the 50 states. This is especially meaningful when considering how medical mistrust plays into this underutilization among the city’s extremely diverse population.

### [\*\*New documentary revisits Terri Schiavo case\*\*](#)

*Axios*

December 13, 2023

A new documentary revisits the decades-old legal fight concerning Terri Schiavo—a Tampa Bay woman who remained in a persistent vegetative state for over ten years before she died in 2005. “Between Life & Death: Terri Schiavo’s Story” explores how the pro-life movement used Schiavo to further their aims and examines how her right-to-die case laid “the groundwork for a post-Roe America.”

### [\*\*22 states to increase minimum wage on Jan. 1\*\*](#)

*McKnight’s Senior Living*

December 13, 2023

Almost half of the states, along with 40 local jurisdictions, are set to ring in 2024 with increases to minimum wage, according to Polsinelli law firm. The 22 states with minimum wage increases coming in the new year: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont and Washington.

### [\*\*Boston VNA Nurses and Healthcare Professionals Cast a Unanimous Vote Authorizing a 14-day Strike\*\*](#)

*PRNewswire*

December 13, 2023

Boston, MA—In response to an increase in the complexity of care required for patients admitted for care at home, in conjunction with a lack of staff and resources to provide that level of care, the 60 registered nurses and healthcare professionals who work for the Visiting Nurses Association of Boston/VNA Care, cast a unanimous vote to authorize a 14-day strike in an effort to move their administration to provide the staffing and wage enhancements they need to provide the care their patients deserve.

### [\*\*Nurses at Suburban Community and Lower Bucks Hospital authorize strike amid contract negotiation stalemate\*\*](#)

*Philadelphia Inquirer*

December 12, 2023

Bucks County, PA—Nurses at Suburban Community Hospital and Lower Bucks Hospital sent a message to their executives: ‘Tis the season for a new contract—or a strike. The contracts affecting roughly 200 nurses at both hospitals expired Oct. 12. Last week, nurses at Suburban Community voted to authorize a strike.



## [Licensed practical nurses petition to oust union at Mayo Clinic's Austin hospital](#)

*Minnesota Reformer*

December 12, 2023

Licensed practical nurses and other medical assistants at Mayo Clinic's Austin hospital are looking to oust their union, the United Steelworkers. It's the latest in a series of campaigns—supported by the anti-union non-profit National Right to Work Legal Defense Fund—to get rid of unions at Mayo Clinic hospitals.

### **Today's Encouragement**

“Time is an equal opportunity employer. Each human being has exactly the same number of hours and minutes every day. Rich people can't buy more hours. Scientists can't invent new minutes. And you can't save time to spend it on another day. Even so, time is amazingly fair and forgiving. No matter how much time you've wasted in the past, you still have an entire tomorrow.” Denis Waitley

***Sign up for our free daily newsletters [here!](#)***

*UNSUBSCRIBE NOTICE: 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.*