

## Cordt Kassner

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December 17th, 2023

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## Headlines

### [\*\*Hospice of the Western Reserve targeting \\$75,000 grant to address racial disparities\*\*](#)

*Cleveland.com*

December 15, 2023

Lakewood, OH—For the better part of the last decade, Hospice of the Western Reserve has been focused on dispelling misperceptions within minority communities related to hospice care. “If you look at statistics across the board, traditionally African-American and Hispanic communities tend not to utilize hospice services,” Hospice of the Western Reserve Manager of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Heidi L. Barham said. “A lot of that is based on historical mistrust, so doing the outreach work helps us to break the stigma of the H-word—that hospice is not a death sentence.” That’s why Hospice of the Western Reserve applied for and recently received a Three Arches Foundation grant, with the intent to address healthcare inequity.

### [\*\*Palliative-Behavioral Health Collaborations Benefit Patients with Serious Mental Illnesses\*\*](#)

*Palliative Care News*

December 15, 2023

Palliative care providers have opportunities to bridge gaps of unmet needs among patients who have serious mental illnesses and their families. ... Building up community-based palliative and mental health care collaborations will be crucial to supporting a growing population of seniors with SMIs with complex needs, he [Dr. Andrew Esch, palliative care physician and senior education advisor at the Center to Advance Palliative Care] said. ... Some of the most common SMIs among seniors include bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder and post traumatic stress and major depression, among others.

## Hospice Provider News

[\*\*Southern Utah man admits to trying to kill wife in hospice to ease her suffering, charges say\*\*](#)

*KTVX-TV (Salt Lake City, UT)*

December 14, 2023

Washington County, UT—A southern Utah man is facing an attempted murder charge after he allegedly admitted to investigators that he tried to kill his wife two years ago to ease her suffering from terminal cancer.



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## Clinical News

[\*\*Indiana remains ‘an island of prohibition’ as surrounding states legalize marijuana. Some hope that changes.\*\*](#)

*WRTV-TV (Indianapolis, IN)*

December 14, 2023

Indianapolis, IN—... Indiana is one of just 12 states with a total ban on marijuana. As calls for legalization grow, are Indiana lawmakers ready to approve it here? Supporters hope so, but opponents say not so fast. “We’re an island of prohibition in Indiana and it is somewhat embarrassing,” said Keith Johnson, a veteran and proponent of legalization.

[\*\*End-of-life doulas are changing conversation around death in Central Oregon\*\*](#)

*Central Oregon Daily (Bend, OR)*

December 14, 2023

Sisters, OR—... Cheryl Adcox has been working as an end-of-life doula in Central Oregon since 2018. That’s when the registered nurse opened Hand-in-Hand End of Life Doula Services. For her, death is “sacred and it’s magical and it’s part of the mystery of life.” It’s a view that few people understand. It’s one these death doulas understand intimately.

[\*\*For those who have lost loved ones, Fargo woman’s memory bears make grief easier to bear\*\*](#)

*Dickinson (ND) Press*

December 14, 2023

Fargo, ND—... Anne Kidder couldn’t agree more. The Fargo seamstress/crafter has found memorial gifts like her memory bears are her most popular product line. In addition to the bears, she also makes memorial elephants, lions and even unicorns. For parents who have

lost a child to miscarriage or stillbirth, she makes a line of smaller bears, which can be weighted to the weight of the child at the time they were born. In addition, she makes memorial pillows, framed and embroidered wall hangings, holiday ornaments, keychains and quilts.



TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

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### [\*\*Oklahoma Woman Finds Help To Cope With Mother’s Loss During The Holidays\*\*](#)

*KOTV-TV (Tulsa, OK)*

December 14, 2023

Tulsa, OK—The loss of a loved one is difficult at any time, but during the holidays, grief and sorrow can be heightened. For one Oklahoma woman, she found comfort through hospice care even after her mother passed away.

## **Regulatory News**

### [\*\*The Backbone of Better Care: Compliance in Home-Based Healthcare\*\*](#)

*CHAP Blog*

*By Jennifer Kennedy, 12/15/23*

In the realm of home-based healthcare, the distinction between good and great care is often defined by the role of compliance. This invisible backbone extends beyond immediate healthcare services, forming a critical framework that upholds every action and procedure to the highest standards of legal and ethical conduct.

### [\*\*After six months of study, Kentucky certificate of need task force says more study needed\*\*](#)

*Kentucky Lantern*

December 15, 2023

Lawmakers wrapped up a six-month study of Kentucky’s certificate of need law Thursday by saying more study is needed before they can make solid recommendations for reform.

## **Public Policy News**

### [\*\*My mom’s agonizing death shows need for peaceful dying option in Minnesota\*\*](#)

*By Françoise Willems-Shirley*

*Minn Post*

December 15, 2023

The end was near and all that was left was more pain and suffering. Many of us, who have not been through this experience, imagine hospice to be a peaceful time where we say our goodbyes to loved ones, reflect on our life and our memories, until we quietly slip away holding the hands of those we cherish. Sadly, this could not have been further from the truth for my mom. For our family, hospice turned out to be a time of tremendous suffering, pain, trauma and sadness. ... That's why I am so grateful that a medical aid-in-dying bill will be introduced in the Minnesota Legislature this session.

*[Editor's Note: The author resides in Hopkins, MN.]*

### [Heed history's warning on aid in dying](#)

*By Sen. John Hoffman*

*Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)*

December 14, 2023

Legislative proposals to legalize physician-assisted suicide in Minnesota have been introduced in Minnesota every year since 2015. The bill contents change regularly as the authors try to stay ahead of the numerous legal, medical and ethical objections that are raised. Many of the changes just create new concerns. In whatever form, such legislation is dangerous and would likely have serious consequences for vulnerable populations—particularly those with disabilities.

*[Editor's Note: The author is a member of the Minnesota Senate representing Champlin. He is a member of Democrat Farmer-Labor.]*

### ['Weighing our options'—Ottawa open to further pause to expand assisted dying rules](#)

*Montreal Gazette*

December 15, 2023

Ottawa, ON—The federal government is considering whether to pause its original plan to broaden the rules that govern medically assisted dying so they include patients whose only underlying condition is a mental disorder. "We're weighing our options," Justice Minister Arif Virani said Wednesday.

## **Mergers & Aquisition News**

### [Cigna ends Humana merger talks, plans \\$10B stock buyback: WSJ](#)

Cigna announced a \$10 billion increase in its stock buyback program, including repurchasing at least \$5 billion of shares in 2024's first half.

### [State can finally start formal review process for Fatima and Roger Williams hospital acquisition](#)

*Rhode Island Current*

December 15, 2023

The two state regulators overseeing hospital conversions in Rhode Island have declared an

application to transfer ownership of Roger Williams Medical Center and Our Lady of Fatima Hospital to a Georgia nonprofit is complete.

## Post-Acute Care News

### ['It's Water Grinding Away The Stone'—Senior Care Providers Face Common Challenges In Continuum Expansions](#)

*Home Health Care News*

December 15, 2023

Home-based care providers are no longer content delivering a standard set of care services. Instead, leaders at in-home care organizations are working strategically to enhance services, creating a more integrated care delivery model—a continuum of care. At Intrepid USA, this means pairing the company's home health and hospice services more closely together. ... Strategically, creating a continuum of services allows providers to maintain relationships with clients and patients longer—before their needs become acute, all the way through to end of life.

*Notable Mentions: Susan Ponder-Stansel, CEO of Alivia Care.*

### [Sutter Health, senior care firm, team up for elderly care San Jose site](#)

*Mercury News (San Jose, CA)*

December 14, 2023

San Jose, CA—Sutter Health and a firm that specializes in health care for seniors have teamed up to launch a San Jose site that will offer an array of services to elderly people who have low-income levels. ... Sutter Health, a medical services titan, is joining forces with WelbeHealth, a physician-led public benefit firm that provides care to seniors, intend to launch the new medical site starting on New Year's Day of 2024. ... The San Jose building will accommodate a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly center, the healthcare firms stated.

### [LAJHealth Opens Second Brandman Center for Senior Care on Westside](#)

*Jewish Journal (Los Angeles, CA)*

December 14, 2023

The Brandman Centers for Senior Care, a PACE program of Los Angeles Jewish Health, has opened a new ... It is the second LAJH PACE program, with the first located on its Reseda campus.

### [Iowa Democrats, advocates call for hearings on nursing home care and oversight](#)

*Iowa Capital Dispatch*

December 14, 2023

Iowa Senate Democrats on Thursday called on the GOP-controlled Senate Oversight Committee to launch a bipartisan investigation into Iowa's nursing homes. Calling it "a matter of life and death," Sen. Claire Celsi, D-West Des Moines, the ranking member on the

committee, formally requested the investigation in a Dec. 14 letter to committee chair Sen. Amy Sinclair, R-Allerton.

### **'Stop the bleeding'—A year after Safe Staffing law, nurses report high patient loads**

*Times Union (Albany, NY)*

December 15, 2023

One year after New York's minimum staffing law for hospitals went into effect, nurses continue to report exceptionally high patient loads as hospital leaders struggle to keep up with turnover rates. ... Implementation of the new regulations—from the establishment of committees to negotiate those institution-specific staffing standards to the mandate for hospitals to report departments' actual staffing ratios to the state Department of Health annually—has been rocky across the state's 222 hospitals.

### **Rural hospitals embrace 'grow your own' approach to staffing**

*Modern Healthcare*

December 15, 2023

Always on the hunt for staff, some rural hospitals have been trying a less common recruitment setting: K-12 classrooms. The hospitals hope that by interesting local children in healthcare careers and investing in their education, the students will one day return to work as full-fledged providers. It's a long game, but one that could help rural hospitals better compete for clinicians with urban health systems that have the budgets for higher salaries and bigger sign-on bonuses.

### **More rural hospitals mulling clinically integrated networks**

*Modern Healthcare*

December 14, 2023

In October, 23 rural hospitals in North Dakota announced the formation of the Rough Rider High-Value Network. Such clinically integrated alliances are designed to reduce hospitals' costs through shared services and provide the infrastructure for hospitals to invest in alternative payment models. Rough Rider CEO Nathan White discussed his outlook for the rural hospital sector, his goals for the Rough Rider network and the advantages of clinically integrated networks compared to merge rs or acquisitions.

### **State says nursing home's residents in 'immediate jeopardy'**

*Salem News (Beverly, MA)*

December 14, 2023

Danvers, MA—State health inspectors have determined that conditions in the Hathorne Hill nursing home constitute "immediate jeopardy" to the health and safety of residents. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health said Tuesday it is investigating the facility and has imposed a freeze on new admissions to Hathorne Hill until the investigation is completed.

### **SEARHC defends Home Health closure at Sitka Assembly meeting**

*KCAW-FM (Sitka, AK)*

December 15, 2023

Sitka, AK—What will home health look like in Sitka without a home health department at the local hospital? The top doctor at the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium or SEARHC gave an update on the future of home health services at the Sitka Assembly meeting on Tuesday.

## General News

### [Creative Role Development, Organizational Culture Keys to Battling 2024's Staffing Headwinds](#)

*Hospice News*

December 15, 2023

The worst of the staffing challenges is far from over for embattled hospice providers seeking fruitful recruitment and retention strategies in 2024. Operators will continue to reckon with clinical capacity strains next year as hospices contend with rising demand from a swelling aging population, according to Nick Westfall, CEO of VITAS Healthcare, a subsidiary of Chemed Corp. ... These taxed clinicians can find a variety of opportunities in the different interdisciplinary roles of hospice care that they might not otherwise have in hospitals or health systems, according to St. Croix CEO Heath Bartness.

### [Christmas tree competition lights the way for Hospice group](#)

*The Acorn (Thousand Oaks, CA)*

December 15, 2023

Thousand Oaks, CA—The Oaks shopping center in Thousand Oaks is decked out for the holidays, with wreaths, ribbons and menorahs from one end to the other. But the mall's highest concentration of Christmas cheer this season was found in a second-floor storefront between the Cheesecake Factory and J.C. Penney, at the Hospice of the Conejo's Festival of Trees, held from Nov. 24 to Dec. 8. The annual pop-up display raises money for the T.O.-based nonprofit with an auction of trees decorated by local businesses and other organizations.

### [The \\$20,000 Christmas Tree—Lake County Hospice's Annual Festival of Trees](#)

*The Bloom (Lake County, CA)*

December 15, 2023

Imagine stepping into a place where Christmas exists in a timeless moment—it starts at the registration tables, where a train circles a beautifully decorated tree. But once you walk down the hallway and into the main tent, you enter another world. This moment, hosted by Lake County Hospice, has become a beacon of hope and compassion, bringing joy to families and touching the hearts of all who attend. ... It's a visual feast. ... But what sets the Festival of Trees apart is its purpose. Beyond the fascinating and enchanting decorations, the event serves as a vital fundraiser for Lake County Hospice. ... People know that Hospice of Lake County fills a significant need in the community and bid accordingly. Winners of auctions donate the tree back to be auctioned again, and yes, one tree sells for \$20,000.



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