

## Cordt Kassner

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## February 5th, 2024

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## Headlines

### **What home health providers need to know about CMS' Medicare enrollment changes**

*Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 1/31/24*

The Medicare enrollment process undergoes annual changes at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to ensure it remains up to date with evolving regulations, policies and health care practices. A number of changes went into effect on Jan. 1, and several of them will affect home health agencies. Here's what home health agencies should know about those changes.

### **Facing the future: Home health providers gear up for 2024's value-based care, M&A landscapes**

*Home Health Care, by Andrew Donlan; 2/1/24*

Home-based care providers have faced many headwinds over the past few years. They'll continue to do so in 2024. But uncertainty has also plagued providers, and there may be less of that this year. Providers know the threat of fee-for-service Medicare cuts. They know Medicare Advantage (MA) penetration

is an unstoppable force. They know staffing woes will be a mainstay, even if the labor market nominally improves.

### **The no. 1 problem still keeping hospital CEOs up at night**

*Becker's Hospital Review, by Kelly Gooch; 1/31/24*

... Here are the 10 most concerning issues hospital CEOs ranked in 2023, along with their average score on an 11-point scale of how pressing CEOs find each issue.

1. Workforce challenges (includes personnel shortages, as well as staff burnout, among other workforce issues) — 2.3
2. Financial challenges — 2.6
3. Behavioral health and addiction issues — 5.3
4. Access to care — 5.6

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## **Hospice Provider News**

### **How hospices are diversifying their services in 2024**

*Hospice News, by Holly Vossel; 1/31/24*

Palliative care, pediatric end-of-life care and end-of-life doula (EOLD) services are top of mind for hospices that are diversifying their services in 2024. Fewer than half of 143 respondents to Hospice News' 2024 Outlook Survey, conducted with Homecare Homebase, reported that their hospice organizations would pursue new care types this year. But the aim of their service diversification efforts may indicate future trends. Service diversification trends in hospice could ramp up as value-based care models incentivize this path, according to Tony Kudner, chief strategy officer of the home-based care consulting company Transcend Strategy Group.

## **Urgent need to address health equity at intersection of American Heart Month and Black History Month 2024**

*American Heart Association; 2/2/24*

Black Americans have the highest incidence of cardiac arrest outside of the hospital and are significantly less likely to survive. Cardiac arrest in Black neighborhoods is associated with alarmingly low treatment and survival rates and recent studies have shown lower rates of both bystander CPR and bystander AED use in these neighborhoods. Recognizing the unique intersection of American Heart Month and Black History Month, the American Heart Association, celebrating 100 years of service saving lives, marks the occasion by honoring three individuals for their work to improve access to equitable health and change health outcomes.

## **Lee County belt tightening means a reduction in hospice care**

*WIUM Trstates Public Radio, by Will Buss; 2/1/24*

Lee County Supervisors are looking for ways to reduce spending. As a result, the health department is scaling back the level of hospice care it provides terminally ill residents. Administrator Michele Ross said the department has pushed to retain hospice service but will refer more residents to private providers.



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## **Medical records specialists reach higher ground in healthcare**

*AAPC News, by Michelle Dick; 2/1/24*

AAPC's 2024 Medical Coding and Billing Salary Report reveals that, as unemployment rates slide down, salaries climb to new heights. ... AAPC's 2024 Medical Coding and Billing Salary Report shows the largest year-to-year salary increases across the board in the history of the Salary Survey.

## **Palliative Care Provider News**

## **Palliative care use trends, racial/ethnic disparities, and overall survival differences among patients with metastatic breast cancer**

*J Palliat Med, by Jincong Q Freeman, Olasubomi J Omoleye, Fangyuan Zhao, Dezheng Huo; 2/1/24*

Conclusions: Palliative care utilization among MBC [Metastatic Breast Cancer] patients significantly increased but remained suboptimal. Racial/ethnic minority patients were less likely to use palliative care, and Black patients had worse survival, than White patients, suggesting the need for improving palliative care access and ameliorating disparities in MBC patients.

## **Clinical News**

### **Odds for dementia nearly triple in the year after a stroke**

*Health Day, by Ernie Mundell; 2/1/24*

A person's odds for a dementia diagnosis nearly triple in the first year after a stroke, new research shows. This post-stroke spike in dementia risk does subside with time, but it never returns to pre-stroke levels, the same report found. "Our findings reinforce the importance of monitoring people with stroke for cognitive decline," said lead researcher Dr. Raed Joundi.



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### **These sisters help families donate brains to science**

*Brain&Life; 2/2/24*

Tish Hevel, 65, talks about the Brain Donor Project, a nonprofit group she and her sister, Annie McManis, 54, established after their father died of Lewy body

dementia. ... "Our father was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia in 2014. In researching the disease, we kept reading about brain donation. Our father had always wanted to donate his body, so we knew he would want to donate his brain as well. And we knew scientists needed tissue. But the process of donating was complicated."

## **Alabama agencies get new resources for dementia care amid 'great void' in services**

*Alabama Reflector, by Alander Rocha; 1/31/24*

In a meeting of the Interagency Council for the Prevention of Elder Abuse on Tuesday, Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) Commissioner Jean W. Brown said the department is "awash in money to just go where we've never gone before in dementia services and dementia care." ... According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Alabama in 2021 had the second highest mortality rate from Alzheimer's disease, behind only Mississippi, at 46.8 per 100,000 people.

## **A pathophysiological approach for selecting medications to treat nociceptive and neuropathic pain in servicemembers**

*Mil Med, by Khan Thi Nguyen, Daniel W Beauchamp, Reginald B O'Hara; 1/31/24*

The prevalence of chronic pain of service members (SMs) in the U.S. is estimated to be higher (roughly 31-44%) compared to that of civilian population (26%). This higher prevalence is likely due to the high physical demands related combat and training injuries that are not immediately resolved and worsen over time. Mental Health America reports that chronic pain can lead to other mental health conditions such as severe anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.



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## **Debriefing after an unexpected hospital death or code**

*Hospitalist.org, by Larry Beresford; 2/1/24*

... Debriefings have been shown to improve participants' ability to manage their grief and are associated with lower rates of burnout. ... Dr. [Kencee] Graves, who is also board-certified in hospice and palliative medicine, thinks hospital-based palliative-care teams have something to offer to the rest of the hospital when it comes to debriefings after sudden deaths. Palliative care may have more experience with in-the-moment debriefings for deaths on service since it often is involved with more of these challenging cases.

## **Cancer facts & figures 2024**

*American Cancer Society; 2024*

Cancer Facts & Figures 2024 is an educational companion for Cancer Statistics 2024, a scientific paper published in the American Cancer Society journal, *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*. These annual reports provide:

- Estimated numbers of new cancer cases and deaths in 2024 by cancer site and US state
- Current cancer incidence, mortality, and survival statistics
- Information on cancer symptoms, risk factors, early detection, and treatment

## **Covenant Health revives Clinical Pastoral Education program**

*KCBD11 NewsChannel; 2/1/24*

Covenant Health is excited to announce the return of its Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Program after a brief pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Clinical Pastoral Education is interfaith professional education for ministry. It brings theological students and ministers of all faiths (pastors, priests, rabbis, imams and others) into supervised encounter with persons in crisis.

## **Regulatory News**

### **'A monumental shift': Home health providers believe review choice demonstration is here to stay**

*Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 2/1/24*

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has been tight-lipped about its Review Choice Demonstration (RCD) plans beyond May 2024. However,

industry leaders believe RCD will be extended across the country on a more permanent basis — a development that agency leaders should recognize as a momentum shifting change. “We’re seeing a monumental shift in home health care and how we actually operate,” Kim Gaffey, founder and CEO of Gaffey Home Nursing and Hospice, said during a webinar Thursday.

## Research News

### **Study testing new strategy for spotting, managing pain in dementia patients**

*McKnights Long-Term Care News, by Kimberly Marselas; 2/1/24*

Up to 80% of dementia patients living in nursing homes also experience pain, but many struggle to communicate their symptoms. A new, \$2.1 million study aims to test recently revised guidelines for staff members tasked with detecting and managing that pain. ... Barbara Resnick, PhD, RN, professor and associate dean for research at the University of Maryland School of Nursing, will lead the project at 12 nursing homes over the next five years.

## Technology / Innovations News

### **Home health industry’s technology partners continue racing toward AI**

*Home Health Care News, by Joyce Famakinwa; 2/1/24*

Artificial intelligence is likely to be a hot topic in home-based care over the next few years. With that in mind, most companies in the space are already adjusting. Post-acute technology company WellSky, for instance, has partnered with Google Cloud to leverage its artificial intelligence (AI) platform, Vertex AI. The partnership also includes Google Cloud’s secure cloud technologies, advanced data analytics tools and machine learning capabilities.

### **Electronic visit verification will become industry standard in the near future, expert predicts**

*McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 2/2/24*

As state Medicaid programs’ adoption of electronic visit verification (EVV) continues to grow, the technology is poised to become the norm for all of home-based care, a marketplace executive says. “For the first time in the history of this industry, you have real-time access to the caregiver in the home,” noted Stephen Vaccaro, president of home care software firm HHAeXchange, in an interview



with *McKnight's Home Care Daily Pulse*. "States are now starting to look at this and say, 'What's next?'"

## **How academic medical centers govern AI prediction tools in the context of uncertainty and evolving regulation**

*NEJM AI*, by Arjun K. Manrai, Ph.D., Andrew L. Beam, Ph.D., and Isaac S. Kohane, M.D., Ph.D.; 1/31/24

Prediction tools driven by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are becoming increasingly integrated into health care delivery in the United States. However, organizational approaches to the governance of AI tools are highly varied. There is growing recognition of the need for evidence on best governance practices and multilayered oversight that could provide appropriate guardrails at the organizational and federal levels to address the unique dimensions of AI prediction tools.

## **General News**

### **Dying mother wins \$10m from WA after cancer became terminal in prison**

*NewsFinale*; 2/2/24

Washington State has paid just shy of \$10 million to settle a lawsuit with a mother-of-two whose cervical cancer became terminal while she was in prison after doctors there failed to diagnose and treat the disease. Paula Gardner, 42, was serving time for drug and burglary offences and did not receive adequate medical care for over two years despite tests showing possible signs of cancer in that time before a scan revealed a growth inside her uterus, according to the lawsuit.

### **What happens to the pets of local hospice patients?**

*InterReviewed*, by Mercedes Hernandez; 2/1/24

Nonprofit organizations dedicated to finding homes for animals say there is a great need for these services when a pet owner is experiencing their final moments in hospice care. Kerrville Pets Alive recently rescued Gracie, a 9-year-old tabby cat whose owner was about to die in hospice. Karen Guerriero, president of the nonprofit's board of directors, said the agency works directly with Peterson Health Hospice in Kerrville to accommodate pets when requested, as in Gracie's case.

## **Corby boy, 10, set for Arctic trek in tribute to father**

*BBC News, by Kate Bradbrook & Brian Farmer; 2/2/24*

A 10-year-old boy once told he might never walk can look forward to days of "wonder" as he prepares to trek in the Arctic in memory of his late father. Caeden, who has cerebral palsy, was born 12 weeks early. But Caeden, of Corby, Northamptonshire, has climbed Ben Nevis and is now set to meet the Arctic challenge. Mountain guide John Cousins said the "biggest danger in such conditions comes from the cold". Caeden is due to travel to Sweden on Monday with mother Lisa, brother Ashton, 12, and sister Khya, 14.

## **Other News**

### **11 recent CEO exits**

*Becker's Hospital Review, by Alexis Kayser; 1/31/24*

Two ousters, five retirements and a slew of C-suite switch-ups — Becker's reported the following hospital and health system CEO departures in January.

## **Today's Encouragement**

**My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together. –  
Desmond Tutu**

*Editor's Note: Hospice & Palliative Care Today honors Black History Month through our "Today's Encouragement" posts for February.*

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