

## Cordt Kassner

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## February 21st, 2024

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## Headlines

### **Medicare home health patients more likely to eventually receive hospice care, study finds**

*McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 2/20/24*

Patients who use home health later in life tend to be more likely to enter hospice for end-of-life care — particularly those without dementia. This underscores the need for better home health staff training and enhanced care continuity for Medicare patients, according to a recent study. ... Those beneficiaries who received home healthcare were more likely to enter hospice during their last year of life compared to those who did not have any home health, the study published Feb. 15 in the *Journal of Palliative Medicine* found.

## Hospice Provider News

### **Death can be isolating and dehumanizing. But what if it didn't have to be?**

*City Life, by Ben Seal; 2/17/24*

... In the three years since Elaine's passing, I've longed for a world where more people could be given the chance to die as she did — with the fullness of life surrounding her, and with complete support, emphasizing the emotional and spiritual, not just the medical. In Philadelphia and beyond, a growing community of death-care workers — doulas, nurses, grief counselors, social workers, even funeral directors — is trying to build that world. They are reclaiming death and dying from the institutional model that has become the norm over the past century.

*Edit or's Note: Has hospice now become so institutionalized and medical/regulatory*

*focused that we have lost sight of "emphasizing the emotional and spiritual, not just the medical"? I ask the question, but do not draw judgment, as answers must be contextualized.*

## **Hospice experts advocate for early admission to hospice**

*The Herald-Mail, by Hospice of Washington County; 2/19/24*

"Former President Jimmy Carter's months-long time in hospice has helped tens of millions of Americans realize that hospice isn't a brink-of-death service, that it helps patients and families focus on quality of life and not just length of life," observed Hospice of Washington County CEO Sara McKay.

*Editor's Note: How is your hospice organization responding to news about President Jimmy Carter's extended hospice care? This article provides a great example.*



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## **Embodied decisions unfolding over time: a meta-ethnography systematic review of people with cancer's reasons for delaying or declining end-of-life care**

*BMC Palliat Care, by Jessica Young, Antonia Lyons, Richard Egan, and Kevin Dew; 2/19/24*

Conclusions: Decisions about when (and for some, whether at all) to accept end-of-life care are made in a complex system with preferences shifting over time, in relation to the embodied experience of life-limiting cancer. Time is central to patients' end-of-life care decision-making. ... The integration of palliative care across the cancer care trajectory and earlier introduction of end-of-life care highlight the importance of these findings for improving access whilst recognising that accessing end-of-life care will not be desired by all patients.

## **The bottom line: Top billing, financial mistakes responsible for home health agency struggles**

*HCCN, by Joyce Famakinwa; 2/16/24*

Home health providers often make mistakes that leave money on the table at best, and at worst, lead to financial ruin.

*Editor's Note: The full article has limited access before a paywall applies.*

## **Maxwell Healthcare Associates, Hospice Dynamix, and Medalogix announce partnership**

*PR Newswire; 2/20/24*

Maxwell Healthcare Associates (MHA), a leading provider in the post-acute space with an average of 20 years of experience, is proud to announce a groundbreaking partnership with Hospice Dynamix, and Medalogix. This collaboration aims to revolutionize hospice care delivery through cutting-edge innovation.



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## **Palliative Care Provider News**

### **How palliative care could help break the SNF-to-hospital cycle**

*Hospice News, by Molly Bookner; 2/20/24*

A dearth of coordination or integration between rehab teams and palliative care teams routinely forces some patients into a cycle between the hospital and the nursing home in their last year of life. ... Nursing homes are incentivized to hospitalize residents eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid because those patients can later return to the nursing home with a higher-paying Medicare benefit before transitioning back to long-term care with lower Medicaid day rates.

## **Regulatory News**

### **Reduced federal share may force state Medicaid programs to cut services, HCBS expert says**

*McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 2/15/24*

The Congressional Budget Office this month released its “[Budget and Economic Outlook](#)” report for the coming decade. In its report, CBO predicted a roughly \$58 billion drop in federal Medicaid outlays for 2024 compared to 2023 — a 9% decrease in federal Medicaid spending, due in part to fewer beneficiaries on states’ Medicaid rolls.

### **Doctor convicted of \$2.8M hospice Medicare fraud scheme**

*HomeCare; 2/20/24*

A federal jury convicted a California man for his role in a scheme to defraud Medicare by billing \$2.8 million for hospice services that patients did not need. From October 2014 to March 2016, [John] Thropay fraudulently certified Medicare patients ... as having terminal illnesses that the patients did not have ... [in order to] bill Medicare for hospice services. In 2015, Thropay was listed as an attending provider for more hospice claims paid by Medicare than any other provider in the nation.



## **Public Policy News**

### **Poll: Md. voters support medical aid-in-dying option, but bill is far from the finish line**

*Maryland Matters, by Danielle J. Brown; 2/19/24*

The survey results, released last week, showed that 69.9% of Maryland voters think that a mentally sound but terminally ill adult with only six months to live should have the legal option to request medical aid-in-dying services, while 22% of those who responded to the poll do not support that option. About 8% of the respondents did not answer. ... The overall support for medical aid-in-dying spans political parties and demographics, according to the poll results, as 72% of

Democrats surveyed were in support along with 69% of Republicans and 65% of unaffiliated voters.

### **[Nebraska] New polling finds 70% support for legalizing medical cannabis**

*Nebraska Examiner, by Paul Hammel; 2/19/24*

New polling found that 70% of respondents are ready to legalize medical marijuana in Nebraska and that a majority of those responding want to approve a novel alternative to property, sales and income taxes.

## **Post-Acute Care News**

### **Ascension posts \$708M quarterly turnaround**

*Becker's Hospital CFO Report, by Alan Condon; 2/19/24*

Ascension reported a net income of \$359.5 million in the fiscal second quarter ending Dec. 31, which is a \$708 million improvement on the \$238.1 million net loss it reported during the same quarter in 2022. "We remain focused on improving hospital operations, ensuring sustainability for the future and making purposeful decisions that improve the health of individuals and the communities we are privileged to serve," CFO Liz Foshage said. "Our Q2 quarterly results are a demonstration of this commitment and a signal that we continue to move in the right direction."



## **Ethics**

### **Survey: Nearly half of healthcare workers witness discrimination against patients**

*McKnights Long-Term Care News, by Foster Stubbs; 2/20/24*

Healthcare workers (HCWs) are likely to witness discrimination in their

workplaces, according to a new [report](#) from the Commonwealth Fund and the African American Research Collaborative. This can contribute to negative health outcomes for patients as well as emotional distress for both patients and healthcare workers.

*Editor's Note: What Policies and Procedures do you have in place for your hospice interdisciplinary teams, volunteers, and non-clinical staff? What diversity education and competencies do you regularly require and update?*

## General News

### [Inside Hackensack Meridian's strategy to reduce nurse turnover](#)

*Becker's Clinical Leadership, by Mariah Taylor; 2/15/24*

The nation has an average [nurse vacancy rate](#) of almost 16%, according to the 2023 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report. At Edison, N.J.-based Hackensack Meridian Health, however, that figure is 6.5%. The secret, according to one of its leaders: creating a strong culture, investing in nurse leadership development and implementing a strong employee referral program.

### [Center for Hospice Care enhances patient support with Pet Peace of Mind partnership and therapy dog Teddy in Mishawaka](#)

*BNN, by Hadeel Hashem; 2/19/24*

In the quiet, compassionate confines of the Center for Hospice Care (CHC) in Mishawaka, a heartwarming alliance has been forged, bringing solace to those in the twilight of their lives and their cherished pets. Recognizing the indissoluble bond between humans and their animal companions, CHC has partnered with Pet Peace of Mind, a national nonprofit organization, to ensure no patient needs to worry about their pet's well-being during their final days. This initiative not only alleviates emotional stress but also introduces a furry bundle of joy, Teddy, a Mini Australian Labradoodle therapy dog, to the mix, adding a layer of comfort and companionship for everyone involved.

## Other News

### [22 recent CEO exits](#)

*Becker's Hospital Review, by Alexis Kayser; updated 2/16/24*

Ousters, retirements and a slew of C-suite switch-ups — Becker's has reported the following hospital and health system CEO departures in 2024

## C-suite roles that lead to 'CEO'

*Becker's Hospital Review, by Alexis Kayser; 2/19/24*

Health systems have varying priorities when choosing to promote a CEO from within, from clinical or financial experience to tenure length. Some roles, like the chief operating officer, have historically been **considered** natural seconds-in-line. But presidents, CFOs, chief medical officers and chief nursing officers might also find themselves in the top seat when a CEO retires or resigns.

## Today's Encouragement

**The time is always right to do what is right. – Dr. Martin Luther King**

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