

## Cordt Kassner

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## February 23rd, 2024

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## Headlines

### **How one hospice owner got convicted of healthcare fraud and how you can avoid that fate**

*Hospice Insights: The Law and Beyond, by Husch Blackwell; 2/21/24*

The owner of a Louisiana hospice was indicted and then convicted of healthcare fraud. How did that happen? In this [podcast] episode, Husch Blackwell's Meg Pekarske and Jonathan Porter talk about how a routine audit led to a whistleblower complaint by a hospice employee, which then led to the hospice owner's criminal conviction following trial in November 2023. Most importantly, the pair discuss how other hospices can avoid that fate.

## Hospice Provider News

### **Jimmy Carter's hospice care shines light on the vital role of end-of-life services in Georgia**

*BNN, by Dil Bar Irshad; 2/19/24*

[Posted in the United Kingdom] As news emerged that former U.S. President Jimmy Carter had entered hospice care at his home in Georgia, the spotlight

turned not only to the respected statesman's final chapter but also to the broader narrative of hospice care in America. This development underscores the critical importance of raising awareness about holistic end-of-life services, a mission that hospices around the nation, such as the esteemed Shakespeare Hospice, have been championing for decades.

*Editor's Note: "Shout out" to the United States' Georgia Hospice & Palliative Care Organization for your ongoing excellence! We are honored to be present with you this morning at your annual conference and to lead today's plenary session on hospice trends. Dr. Cordt Kassner, Publisher and Dr. Joy Berger, Editor in Chief*

## **At life's end, the comfort of home: Rutgers study illuminates pathways to hospice care**

*BNN, by Hadeel Hashem; 2/22/24*

[This] research underscores a simple yet profound truth: the utilization of home health care significantly boosts the likelihood of receiving hospice care at home during one's final days.



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## **Racial differences in hospice care outcomes among patients with advanced heart failure: Systematic review and meta-analysis**

*Am J Cardiol, by Diego Chambergo-Michilot, Victor G Becerra-Gonzales, Veraprapas Kittipibul, Rosario Colombo, Katia Bravo-Jaimes; 2/19/24*

There remains a paucity of investigational data about disparities in hospice services among people with non-cancer diagnoses, specifically in heart failure. Black patients with advanced heart failure have been disproportionately affected by health care services inequities but their outcomes after hospice enrollment are not well studied. We aimed to describe race-specific outcomes in patients with advanced heart failure who were enrolled in hospice services.

## **Mental health service integration in hospice organizations: A national survey of hospice clinicians and medical leadership**

*Am J Hosp Palliative Care; by Catherine Lowenthal, Maureen Ekwebelem, Mary E Callahan, Katherine Pike, Samuel Weisblatt, Milagros Silva, Angela L Nova s, Amy S Tucci, M Carrington Reid, Daniel Shalev; 2/20/24*

**Objectives:** 1. To identify patterns of mental health service integration in hospice organizations nationally; 2. To characterize gaps in mental health service delivery in hospice settings as perceived by hospice clinicians and medical leadership.

**Conclusions:** Significant mental health symptoms are common among hospice patients, and hospice organizations perceive these needs are not being met.

### **New outlook report shows home-based care providers bullish on near-term revenue opportunities in the year ahead**

*WTWH Media LLC, by Marshall Matheson; 2/20/24*

Home Health Care News, a WTWH Media publication, has released the results of its 2024 Home-Based Care Outlook Survey, identifying the top challenges and opportunities for home-based care providers in the year ahead.



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## **Clinical News**

### **Identity shifts throughout HCT: A holistic approach to patient, caregiver support**

*Hematology Advisor; by Katie Schoepner, MSW, LICSW; Leah Christianson, OPN-CG; Hailey Hassel, MSW, LICSW; Cortney Alleyne, MPH; 2/20/24*

Patients undergoing hematopoietic cell transplant (HCT), their caregivers, and family members often experience dramatic shifts in their identity during and after the transplant process. These shifts can cause significant disruption in their lives, even among the most stable family and friend units. With holistic guidance and informed, empathetic care from professionals on healthcare teams, these patients and their support persons can better cope with the identity-related challenges they face.

*Editor's Note: See the patients you serve as persons. While this article focuses on*

*person undergoing hematopoietic cell transplant, its rich insights about the patient/person's "tangible and intangible identity shifts" apply to the persons you serve, whatever the diagnosis. Read this article to develop your empathy and its practical applications throughout the services your organizations provide.*

### **Psychological issues in palliative care: Elissa Kozlov and Des Azizoddin**

*GeriPal podcast, by Alex Smith; 2/22/24*

Today we talk with two psychologists who are deeply invested in addressing psychological aspects of care for people living with serious illness. Elissa Kozlov, a geropsychologist and director of a new population aging MPH at Rutgers, surveyed AAHPM members, and found that doctors reported major shortcomings in level of comfort and knowledge caring for patients with psychological illness. She conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 38 palliative care trials, finding that many excluded people with serious illness, and a lack of impact on psychological outcomes. Analyzing the Health and Retirement Study, she found 60% of older adults screened positive for depression in the last year of life.

### **Exploring whether a diagnosis of severe frailty prompts advance care planning and end of life care conversations**

*Nurs Older People, by Stacey Dodson; 2/21/24*

**Findings:** Frailty appeared to be complex, multifaceted and at times difficult to identify. A diagnosis of severe frailty did not necessarily prompt advance care planning and end of life care conversations. Such conversations were more likely to happen if the person had comorbidities, for example cancer. Prognostication appeared to be challenging, partly due to the gradual and uncertain trajectory in frailty and a lack of understanding, on the part of healthcare professionals, of the condition and its effects.



## **We gave palliative care patients VR therapy. More than 50% said it helped reduce pain and depression symptoms**

*The Conversation; 2/22/24*

Our study, published this week in the journal [BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care](#), found more than 50% of patients experienced clinically meaningful reductions in symptoms such as pain and depression immediately after a 20-minute VR session. ... Personalised VR means each person experiences content that is meaningful to that individual. So rather than asking patients to choose, for example, between a rainforest and a beach VR experience, we interviewed the patients before their sessions to gauge their interests and create a VR session tailored to them.

## **Regulatory News**

### **Planning Ahead: Medicare, Medicaid or Hospice for at-home care**

*The Mercury, by Janet Colliton; 2/21/24*

If you are seeking at-home care assistance for a family member that is paid either in full or in part by the government, you can find that the system is complicated and, unless your loved one fits within one of the designated categories, you may be limited to paying from your family member's asset or your own. Here are some of the differences and criteria.

*Editor's Note: This concise, user-friendly article by a Certified Elder Law Attorney provides simple descriptions of this all-important information. What Hospice Medicare information does your staff need to know and use? What clarity do you provide to the public / community you serve?*

## **Public Policy News**

### **House of Delegates considering SB 280, Medical Aid in Dying**

*The Connection to Your Community, by Mercia Hobson; 2/20/24*

Virginia is a battleground state within itself. State legislators are fiercely divided concerning proposed legislation, SB 280. If passed, it would allow an eligible adult diagnosed with a terminal disease to request an attending health care provider to prescribe a fatal dose of a controlled substance to be self-administered for the purpose of ending the patient's life. Senate Bill 280, one of

the two Virginia bills concerning Death with Dignity, passed passed the Senate. Its companion, House Bill 858, which was originally "put on hold for the day," failed in committee.



## Mergers & Aquisition News

**Transaction: Legacy Care Partners acquires Superior Home Health; SSM Health promotes Health at Home Arm**

*Nation World News Desk; 2/21/24*

Legacy Care Partners – which also owns Advanced Home Care – has acquired Superior Home Health and Superior Hospice of Texas. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

## Technology / Innovations News

**Health systems bucking IT outsourcing trend**

*Becker's Health IT, by Naomi Diaz; 2/19/24*

The role and size of information technology departments within health systems play a crucial role in shaping the organization's technological infrastructure. And despite a growing trend toward outsourcing IT functions, many health systems continue to maintain robust in-house teams.

## General News

**'One more moment' singer Cat Janice, 31, shares heartbreaking health update weeks after her song to help son through diagnosis went viral**

*The U.S. Sun, by Olivia Salamone; 2/21/24*

... Janice underwent surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation and was told that she

was cancer-free in July 2022. However, in June 2023, she announced that the disease had come back, this time in her lungs. ... The singer has continued to make music throughout her cancer battles. ... "Dance You Out Of My Head" ... made it to the top 10 worldwide songs on iTunes, and ... number one on TikTok Billboard Top 50. ... The musician transferred the song rights to her son, Loren "which means all the proceeds for the now-viral hit (along with the rest of her catalog) will go directly into his bank account," the outlet continued. ... "I don't want to die. But I've had a really wonderful life, and I got to have this really incredible last moment, and I thank God for it." The U.S. Sun has reached out to Cat Janice for comment and her husband Kyle Higginbotham for an update.

### **[No One Dies Alone Volunteer] A 'national treasure': St. Peter's Health volunteer has spread smiles and care for over 50 years**

*Independent Record, by Sonny Tapia; 2/20/24*

A volunteer with an infectious smile, care in her heart and a willingness to put others first has partially called it quits after 53 years at St. Peter's Health. Helen Bunkowske is retiring from part of her duties at the hospital that included walking patients to their rooms for appointments and helping stressed-out patients before a surgery, but is continuing her work with the hospice program and the No One Dies Alone program through the hospital.

### **Woman tried to kill 88-year-old father in hospice by choking him**

*Deerfield Beach, FL Local News 10; 2/21/23*

A Deerfield Beach woman is facing three felony charges, including attempted murder, after deputies said she tried to choke her 88-year-old father to death while he was under hospice care.

## **Other News**

### **AHCA/NCAL CEO Mark Parkinson announces retirement**

*McKnights Senior Living, by Lois A. Bowers; 2/20/24*

Mark Parkinson will retire from his position as president and CEO of the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living effective Jan. 15, 2025, the groups announced today. He has been at the helm of AHCA/NCAL since January 2011.

### **Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 2/22/24 per [nasdaq.com](https://www.nasdaq.com)**



- Adus HomeCare (ADUS: \$89.85)
- Amedisys (AMED: \$94.48)
- BrightSpring Health (BTSG: \$9.75)
- Encompass (EHC: \$74.06)
- Enhabit (EHAB: \$9.39)
- Ensign Group (ENSG: \$123.08)
- HCA Healthcare (HCA: \$313.43)
- Humana (HUM: \$368.675)
- Pennant Group (PNTG: \$17.14)
- Vitas / Chemed Corp (CHE: \$594.57)

## Today's Encouragement

When we're talking about diversity, it's not a box to check. It is a reality that should be deeply felt and held and valued by all of us. — Ava DuVernay

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