

## Cordt Kassner

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## March 20th, 2024

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## Hospice Provider News

### Care coordination, quality data crucial to hospice referral growth

*Hospice News, by Holly Vossel; 3/18/24*

Care coordination and quality data will be engines for hospice referral growth. Hospices saw census volumes drop during the COVID-19 public health emergency as facilities nationwide restricted access to patients amid mandated state closures. Providers often turned to electronic communications to reach patients in facility- and community-based settings alike. Adaptability has been among the keys to coping with the pandemic’s lingering punches in referral streams, according to Craig Dresang, CEO of California-based YoloCares. As end-of-life care received a spotlight during a global pandemic, the historical viewpoints around hospice care delivery have been undergoing a “fundamental shift,” Dresang said.

### CMS.gov: ACO Primary Care Flex Model

*CMS.gov; 3/19/24*

The ACO Primary Care Flex Model (ACO PC Flex Model) is a voluntary model that

will focus on primary care delivery in the Medicare Shared Savings Program (Shared Savings Program). It will test how prospective payments and increased funding for primary care in Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) impact health outcomes, quality, and costs of care. The flexible payment design will empower participating ACOs and their primary care providers to use more innovative, team-based, person-centered and proactive approaches to care. The model, which starts January 1, 2025, aims to grow participation in ACOs and the Shared Savings Program and increase the number of people with Medicare in an accountable care relationship.

## **Ageing Media Network, a WTWH media company, announces 2024 Aspect Awards Winners**

*Skilled Nursing News, by Jessica Longly; 3/18/24*

Ageing Media Network, a WTWH Media company, is proud to announce the 2024 Aspect Awards winners. With more than 60 submissions across the categories of Behavioral Health, Home Health & Home Care, Hospice & Palliative Care, Senior Housing & Senior Living, and Skilled Nursing (SNF), the focus on innovation and creativity is sharper than ever before. *[Click on the title's link for the full list. We highlight recipients specific to our newsletter's hospice and palliative readers, and CHAP, a sponsor.]*

### *HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE WINNERS*

- *Multimedia Campaign: Provider Winner, Hospice of the Panhandle; Second Place, St. Croix Hospice*
- *Print, Direct Mail & Billboard Campaign: Provider Winner, Goldencare Hospice and Palliative Care LLC; Vendor Winner, Partner Plus Media*
- *Rebranding (Before and After): Provider Winner, Priority Life Care*
- *Social Media Campaign: Provider Winner, Community Hospice & Palliative Care;*
- *Video or TV Campaign: Provider Winner, Interim Healthcare, Inc.; Vendor Winner, Absolute Studios*

### *HOME HEALTH & HOME CARE*

- *New Brand Launch: Provider Winner, Community Hospice & Palliative Care [CHAP, a sponsor for our newsletter]*

- *Video or TV Campaign: Provider Winner, Adoration Home Health & Hospice; Second Place: Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP)*

*Editor's Note: Congratulations to all winners! Thank you for representing our hospice and palliative care movement with creative innovation!*



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### ***Hospice of Michigan recognizes its social workers who care for patients***

*Fox 17 West Michigan, by Lindsay Hoffman; 3/19/24*

*For National Social Worker Month, Hospice of Michigan explains social workers go above and beyond to guide a patient's end-of-life care. ... [TV Interview] ... Hospice social workers offer countless benefits to the patients, families, and not-for-profits they serve, including: [list provided in article's text]*

## ***Palliative Care Provider News***

### ***Palliative Care Movement achieves significant progress in California***

*California Health Care Foundation, by Claudia Boyd-Barrett; 3/19/24*

*... Palliative care has taken root in California over the past 15 years, driven by hundreds of leaders within health plans, hospitals, clinics, home care agencies, advocacy and education organizations, and state government. ... Some of California's greatest palliative care progress has been accomplished in programs serving people at the lowest income levels through the state's Medi-Cal program and through public health care systems.*

### ***The benefits of integrating palliative care into home-based care programs***

*Home Health Care News, by Patrick Filbin; 3/18/24*

*Navigating new service lines can be daunting, especially when integrating palliative care into existing service lines. Yet, as some providers can attest, embracing change can also yield significant benefits. ... "It's easier to remain in your own silo," Tiffany Hughes, COO PalliCare Inc., said at the Hospice News/Palliative Care News Palliative Care Conference in Tampa, Florida. "I saw that [mindset] coming from hospice where*

*it's the perfect model of care because you control everything. When you start adding in different elements and add more hands into the pot, it gets more complicated." Providers who are integrating more models of care into their operations are showing that – in general – the juice is worth the squeeze.*



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## **Clinical News**

### ***Lubbock author publishes "I'm on Hospice: A Children's Book for Processing & Coping With a Terminal Illness"***

*CBS WDTV 5; book is by Sydney Crane (author) and Nina Broen (illustrator); tv interview 3/14/24*

*While a child is in the care of a hospice team, they will likely hear words and phrases that they do not know or have questions they are unsure how to ask. Presenting information through Riley's story, *I'm On Hospice* encourages conversations and facilitates a space for questions, discussion, and understanding within any relationship dynamic surrounding a terminally ill child. Riley is a nine-year-old boy whose life purpose is all about baseball, and he shares how each of his hospice caretakers helps him be comfortable and safe.*

*Editor's Note: This book is available on [Amazon](#) and [Kindle](#). The description above is from Amazon, as the tv interview is video.*

### ***Improvements in interdisciplinary communication following the implementation of a standardized Handoff Curriculum: SAFETIPS (Statistics, Assessment, Focused Plan, Pertinent Exam findings, to Dos, If/Thens, Pointers/Pitfalls, and Severity of Illness)***

*Cureus, by Shaefali Shandilya and Justen M. Aprile; 3/18/24*

*Handoffs between medical providers serve a crucial patient safety function. While most published literature on the topic studies the handover process among physicians, robust literature is available on interdisciplinary medical communication. Little is known about the downstream effects of effective physician handover on subsequent physician and nursing interactions. ...*

*Results: Statistical analysis revealed significant post-intervention mean score increases of one full point in four categories, namely organization and efficiency, communication, content, and clinical judgment.*

***Health care utilization and opioid use in patients receiving an integrated palliative care intervention for treatment of head and neck cancer compared to a historical control***

*Elsevier, International Journal of Radiation; by F. Rizwan, C. D'Avella, M. Albert, T. King, B. Egleston, T.J. Galloway, M. Chwistek, C. Fang, A. El-jawahri, J.R. Bauman; online access for 4/1/24 release*

*Patients receiving chemoradiation therapy (CRT) for head and neck cancer (HNC) can develop significant symptomology (odynophagia, malnutrition) resulting in frequent hospitalizations and decreased quality of life (QOL) and continue to have chronic symptoms such as dysphagia and/or pain. The integration of a palliative care (PC) team during CRT has the potential to address the high symptom burden and improve QOL.*



***Giving hospice patients a dignified end-of-life experience***

*Steve Aduato On the Air, with Charles Vialotti, MD; 3/13/24*

*On--location at Villa Marie Claire Residential Hospice, Steve Aduato is joined by medical director, Charles Vialotti, MD to talk about his personal commitment to hospice care and giving residents and their families a dignified end-of-life experience. Editor's Note: Dr. Vialotti describes living on-site of this residential hospice, and communicating with residents and families the "humanity" of the dying experience.*

**Regulatory News**

***Medicare Advantage prior authorization: The impact - increased access to care***

*HHS-OIG; 3/19/24*

*HHS-OIG's work on this issue drew national attention to the problem spurring the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Industry, and Congress to action.*

*Editor's Note: You can download the "Impact Brief" from this site. Click on the title's link.*

***Personal care workers received most Medicaid fraud convictions in 2023: OIG***

*McKnights Home Care, by Adam Healy; 3/15/24*

*More personal care workers were convicted for Medicaid fraud than any other provider type last year, according to a new report released Thursday by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General. OIG found that 279 personal care services (PCS) attendants were convicted of Medicaid fraud in 2023 — far more than the next four highest provider types combined. These convictions amounted to more than \$10.5 million in criminal charges.*



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***Post-Acute Care News***

***For-profit nursing homes are cutting corners on safety and draining resources with financial shenanigans – especially at midsize chains that dodge public scrutiny***

*The Conversation, by Sean Campbell and Charlene Harrington; 3/14/24*

*... Overall, private-equity investors wreak havoc on nursing homes, slashing registered nurse hours per resident day by 12%, outpacing other for-profit facilities. The aftermath is grim, with a daunting 14% surge in the deficiency score index, a standardized metric for determining issues with facilities, according to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report.*



*The human toll comes in death and suffering. A study updated in 2023 by the National Bureau of Economic Research calculated that 22,500 additional deaths over a 12-year span were attributable to private-equity ownership, equating to about 172,400 lost life years. The calculations also showed that private-equity ownership was responsible for a 6.2% reduction in mobility, an 8.5% increase in ulcer development and a 10.5% uptick in pain intensity.*

*Editor's Note: See the next article, "For-profit nursing home owners rebut report that left few untarnished."*

### ***For-profit nursing home owners rebut report that left few untarnished***

*McKnights Long-Term Care, by Kimberly Marselas; 3/18/24*

*A brutal takedown of private nursing home ownership published last week included both pointed and widespread attacks on the role of for-profit companies in the sector, adding to stakeholders' fears that negative characterizations will stymie much-needed future investment. ... However, what the article failed to highlight, providers and their representatives pointed out to McKnight's Long-Term Care News Friday, are the investments many for-profits providers are pouring into quality and innovation efforts in a field with historically low margins — margins that they said dried up during the pandemic's crisis days.*

*Editor's Note: See the original article that this article rebuts (above this post), "For-profit nursing homes are cutting corners on safety and draining resources with financial shenanigans - especially at midsize chains that dodge public scrutiny."*

### ***SNFists found to reduce 'burdensome' end-of-life care***

*McKnights Long-Term Care News, by Josh Henreckson; 3/18/24*

*Advanced practice clinicians who specialize in skilled nursing care help reduce the use of unnecessary care at end of life, according to new study results released Friday in JAMA Network Open. These physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants — who provide at least 80% of their evaluation and care visits in nursing homes — were referred to collectively as "SNFists" by the report authors. They reduced the burdensome care transitions that many residents face, benefiting both caregivers and their patients, the study confirms.*

## **Technology / Innovations News**

### ***Creating a community-led telehealth approach for supportive cancer care***

*mHealthIntelligence, by Anuja Vaidya; 3/18/24*



*Tennessee Oncology is joining forces with rural patients to explore strategies for expanding telehealth access to supportive cancer care services. ... The NEST program aims to expand access to palliative care, psychology, and integrative oncology and nutrition services among rural cancer patients in seven Middle Tennessee counties: Robertson, Dickson, Putnam, Dekalb, Warren, Bedford, and Coffee counties.*

## **General News**

### **[Legendary healthcare researcher John E. Wennberg, who shaped efforts to reform the nation's healthcare system, dies at 89](#)**

*Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine, by Susan Green; 3/18/24*

*John E. (Jack) Wennberg, MD, MPH, founder and director emeritus of The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, the Peggy Y. Thomson Professor in the Evaluative Clinical Sciences Emeritus at the Geisel School of Medicine, and founding editor of the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care, died March 10, 2024. He was 89 years old. "His work pioneered a field that has grown into an entirely new academic discipline in medicine," Duane Compton, PhD, Geisel School of Medicine dean, says. ... Wennberg focused on improving decision quality by combining better clinical evidence with informed patient preferences. The introduction of shared decision-making between clinicians and patients to preserve warranted variation due to patient preferences is now embedded in health policies across the globe.*

### **['Living well, leaving well': Yishun end-of-life art exhibition allows seniors to demystify death, document life](#)**

*Today, by Nikki Yeo; 3/18/24, updated 3/19/24*

*A senior-led exhibition [in Singapore], Tides, features a group of eight women and their reflections on end-of-life matters. ... The project engaged seniors in the Yishun community over nine months to form art works based on "living well" and "leaving well." ... The pictures [of family foods] are overlaid with handwritten messages exchanged between Madam Devi and her grandchildren. ... Her grandchildren calls her "atha", or grandmother, and have written, "I love you so much", "from young I'm eating your food", "I'm so grateful to you".*

### **[Where states stand on medical marijuana in the workplace](#)**

*JD Supra, by Madalyn Cohee; 3/18/24*

*A federal judge in Vermont last month ruled a plaintiff's medical marijuana use was not protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act. In Skoric v. Marble Valley*

*Regional Transit District et al., the plaintiff was fired by his employer for failing a random drug test by testing positive for marijuana despite having a valid, state-issued medical marijuana card and being prescribed medical marijuana to treat his chronic pain and depression.*

## **Education**

### **Signs of end-stage Parkinson's disease**

*Medical News Today; Medically reviewed by Heidi Moawad, MD, by Meara Withe; 3/18/24*

*... Understanding the signs of end-stage Parkinson's disease is crucial for patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals alike. This article explores the physical health, mental health, and emotional dimensions of end-stage Parkinson's, shedding light on what to expect and how to provide compassionate care during this demanding phase.*

*Editor's Note: Hospice and palliative non-medical interdisciplinary team members need to understand disease-specific factors related to patients' experiences and family caregivers' challenges. These include social workers, chaplains, counselors, and caregiver-oriented volunteers. These include hospice bereavement counselors, in order to better hear and be fully present to bereaved caregivers' stories.*

## **Other News**

### **Healthcare CEO exits marked by fresh faces, empty tanks**

*Becker's Hospital Review, by Alexis Kayser; 3/19/24*

*Last year, hospital CEO turnover hit a record high, placing additional strain on many health systems' unstable foundations. In March, Becker's connected with healthcare leaders at prominent executive search and consulting firms to learn where this trend stands. ... [This article examines:]*

- *When CEOs are leaving ...*
- *Why CEOs leave suddenly ...*
- *How CEO experience influences exits ...*

## **Today's Encouragement**

***Don't wait for someone to bring you flowers. Plant your own garden and decorate your own soul. - Luther Burbank***

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