

## Cordt Kassner

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## May 3rd, 2024

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## Headlines

### **May 6-12, 2024 National Nurses Week: Nurses Make a Difference**

*Nursing World; by the American Nurses Association; 4/30/24*

The American Nurses Association is celebrating National Nurses Week 2024 May 6 - May 12, and throughout May. This year's theme, "Nurses Make the Difference," honors the incredible nurses who embody the spirit of compassion and care in every health care setting. Join us in recognizing the invaluable contributions of nurses worldwide. Whether you're a health care professional, a patient, or simply someone who appreciates nurses' dedication, this is your chance to express gratitude and support for their capability and fortitude. Let's come together to celebrate Nurses Week 2024 and show our appreciation for these extraordinary professionals!

## Editor Picks

### **Transitional Bridges offers compassionate alternative to plastic belongings bags**

*ABC 8 News, Richmond, VA; by EIN Presswire; 4/30/24*

Transitional Bridges, a San Diego-based nonprofit focused on inspiring compassion and improving end-of-life care through art, has created Transitional Belongings Bags, a compassionate and eco-friendly alternative to the plastic bags hospitals use to hand over belongings to loved ones after a patient has died. The concept was first introduced 17 years ago by the Irish Hospice Foundation Hospice Friendly Hospitals Program to promote dignity and sensitivity when returning a loved one's possessions to bereaved family and friends. ... Lorene Morris, the founder and president of Transitional Bridges, became inspired to bring the movement to the U.S. after her mother, an artist, died unexpectedly ... When the family was handed their mother's possessions in two large, clear plastic bags, Morris recalls, "I felt like the whole world could see those intimate items. It was just so wrong."

*Editor's Note: Executive leaders, have you ever been with a family as they leave your hospice facility or inpatient unit, without their loved one who just died? More personally, have you been the family member, leaving with possessions, but not the person? This simple, easy-to-replicate act can shift a stark, "plastic" task to a gentle, compassionate moment.*

## Hospice Provider News

### **[NHPCO's 2024 Pediatric Palliative and Hospice Care Needs Assessment](#)**

*NHPCO; via email; 5/1/24*

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) has released [the 2024 Pediatric Palliative and Hospice Care Needs Assessment](#). If your organization has cared for at least one pediatric patient during the last four years, please complete the survey. The Needs Assessment is a product of the NHPCO's Pediatric Advisory Council with the goal to gain a better understanding of the organizations and providers caring for pediatric patients with serious illnesses throughout the United States. The needs assessment helps create resources and support advocacy. You do not need to be an NHPCO member to complete the survey. Any questions can be directed to the Pediatric Advisory Council at [pediatrics@nhpco.org](mailto:pediatrics@nhpco.org).

## **Evolving medical licensing laws could affect hospice workforce, diversity challenges**

*Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/1/24*

A rash of states are restructuring their medical licensing requirements to allow more trained clinicians from other countries to find employment in the United States. The trend is an aim to address prolific workforce shortages, including in hospice, but could also have impacts on improving diversity, equity and inclusion. Some states have restructured medical licensing requirements for certain international medical graduates (IMGs) to allow more clinical professionals to work in the United States.

## **Clinical News**

### **Assessing caregiver burnout for hospice, palliative patients**

*Hospice News, by Jim Parker; 4/30/24*

Burnout is a state of complete mental, physical and emotional exhaustion. Symptoms of burnout can include depression, compassion fatigue, stress and anxiety, and apathy, both in general life and towards work tasks, according to the Mayo Clinic. To help address these issues — and to help ensure that caregiving remained sustainable — a team of researchers from the Ann & Robert Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago and the University of Pittsburgh launched a project to improve assessment of caregiver burnout.

### **Illinois doctors would have easier access to patients’ end-of-life wishes under bill advancing in Springfield**

*WTTW, Chicago; by Amanda Vinicky; 5/1/24*

Doctors would gain the ability to more easily learn patients’ end-of-life wishes under a [measure](#) advancing in Springfield. Currently, doctors say it can sometimes be difficult for medical personnel to access those forms, especially if a patient is incapacitated or having an emergency away from their medical

home. ... [State Senator Julie] Morrison [D-Deerfield] said she's been working for a decade on the creation of an electronic database that would keep a record of people's end-of-life treatment plans, as detailed in the state health department's [Public Health Uniform Practitioner Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment](#), or POLST, form. That document is more commonly known by its previous incarnation, a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR).



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## **America's favorite, weed, comes with big health risks: Psychosis is an increasing risk of today's strong marijuana.**

*Psychology Today; by Mark S. Gold, MD; 4/30/24*

Key Points:

- Young adults and teens can develop an addiction to weed and become psychotic.
- Many people don't know that regular marijuana use may carry serious health risks, especially for the young.
- No medication is FDA-approved for treating cannabis use disorder.
- One cannabis-induced psychotic episode ups the risk of developing bipolar disorder or schizophrenia by 50%.

*Editor's Note: For a list of what is legal (or not) in all 50 states (and D.C., Puerto Rico), see the article in our newsletter 5/2/24, "[Medical marijuana may be sold in pharmacies, but it is not a medicine.](#)"*

## **Regulatory News**

### **New federal rule meant to strengthen nondiscrimination protections, advance civil rights in healthcare**

*McKnights Senior Living; by Kathleen Steele Gaivin; 4/30/24*

The Department of Health and Human Services on Friday released a [final](#)

rule aiming to protect individuals from discrimination in healthcare, including members of the LGBTQ+ community. ... The rule “reverses a Trump-era regulation and restores gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination protections under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act,” Bloomberg Law reported. Section 1557 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability by entities that primarily provide healthcare and receive federal funding. It is enforced by the HHS Office for Civil Rights.

### **What Hospice VBID’s ending means for palliative care**

*Hospice News; by Markisan Naso; 5/1/24*

The impending demise of the hospice component of U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ value-based insurance design (VBID) model has largely been met with a sense of relief by providers as they plan new initiatives for palliative care in 2025. ... The program, which initially contained promising components designed to give patients better access to palliative care, instead became an increasing source of frustration for organizations. ... With the end date for the hospice component of the VBID model approaching, many palliative care providers are left with concern for their patients and questions about the coming transition, as they shift focus to what happens next.

*Editor's Note: This article includes perspectives from Rory Farrand, Vice President of Palliative and Advanced Medicine at NHPCO, and Mollie Gurian, Vice President of Home-Based and HCBS Policy at LeadingAge.*



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## **Public Policy News**

### **Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill recommended by second committee in Massachusetts legislature**

*New Boston Post; 5/1/24*

A bill that would legalize physician-assisted suicide has gotten a favorable vote from a second legislative committee, ... This is the earliest in the state’s two-year legislative session that the bill has been recommended by the Joint Committee on Public Health, and it’s the first time the bill has made it out of the Joint

Committee on Health Care Financing, said Melissa Stacy, Northeast regional advocacy manager for Compassion & Choices, according to MASsterList.

### **Is pot legal now? Despite big marijuana news, it's still in legal limbo.**

*USA Today; by Joel Shannon and Jeanine Santucci; 5/1/24*

Tuesday brought big marijuana news: The Biden Administration is expected to soon reclassify marijuana for the first time in decades, putting it in a less restrictive drug category that would allow it to be studied and prescribed more easily. But that news comes in a nation where many states have already crafted their own marijuana policy: Some states allow for it to be prescribed already; others allow people to use it recreationally. Few states ban it outright. ... Here's what to know. ...

## **Mergers & Aquisition News**

### **CVS buys Medicare Advantage brokerage**

*Modern Healthcare; by Nona Tepper; 4/30/24*

CVS Health paid an undisclosed sum to acquire Hella Health, according to the Medicare Advantage brokerage's founder. Hella Health debuted in 2020 and claims to offer more than 3,000 Medicare plans from insurers such as CVS Health subsidiary Aetna, UnitedHealth Group subsidiary UnitedHealthcare and Humana.



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### **Aetna hit with \$900M in surprise MA costs, CVS Health report**

*Modern Healthcare; by Nona Tepper; 5/1/24*

CVS Health will launch a multiyear plan to boost Medicare Advantage profitability after its Aetna subsidiary recorded \$900 million in higher-than-anticipated medical costs during the first quarter, President and CEO Karen Lynch said

during an earnings announcement Wednesday. "We continue to evaluate our cost structure and productivity and will accelerate these and other initiatives over the next few months," Lynch said.

### **Ensign Group buys 7 nursing homes in 6 states**

*Modern Healthcare; by Diane Eastabrook; 5/1/24*

Senior living services company Ensign Group acquired seven skilled nursing facilities in six states, as well as a long-term acute care hospital. The deals closed Wednesday [5/1], the same day Ensign Group will report first quarter 2024 earnings. The acquisitions include: [click on the title's link for the list] ...

## **Post-Acute Care News**

### **Why hospital executives think Walmart Health failed**

*Becker's Health IT; by Giles Bruce; 5/1/24*

Health system leaders told *Becker's* they're not surprised by the failure of Walmart Health given the arduous economics of healthcare and the difficulty of providing primary care at scale.

Walmart [said](#) April 30 it would be closing its 51 Walmart Health Centers and virtual care offerings five years into its foray into healthcare. The company cited the "challenging reimbursement environment" and "escalating operating costs" that left its healthcare arm unprofitable.

*Editor's Note: Features interviews with ...*

- *David Sylvan, chief strategy and innovation officer of Cleveland-based University Hospitals;*
- *Ashis Barad, MD, chief digital information officer of Pittsburgh-based Allegheny Health Network;*
- *Kiran Avancha, PhD, chief innovation officer of Scottsdale, Ariz.-based HonorHealth;*
- *Saad Chaudhry, chief digital and information officer of Annapolis, Md.-based Luminis Health;*
- *Richard Zane, MD, chief innovation officer of Aurora, Colo.-based UHealth;*
- *Roy Rosin, chief innovation officer of Philadelphia-based Penn Medicine;*
- *Chris Coburn, chief innovation officer of Somerville, Mass.-based Mass General Brigham;*



- *Michael Hasselberg, PhD, RN, chief digital health officer of University of Rochester (N.Y.) Medical Center.*



TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

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## **InnovAge launches PACE Center, helping seniors independently with high-quality care**

*Los Angeles Sentinel; 5/1/24*

InnovAge Holding Corp., the healthcare industry leader in providing comprehensive healthcare programs to dual-eligible seniors through the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), celebrated the grand opening of its newest center in California on April 24. ... Guests toured the 22,000 square foot, two-level renovated center — which includes a medical clinic with exam rooms, dining room, four-day rooms, quiet room, outdoor patio, and other amenities. The program's service area extends beyond Crenshaw, providing care and support to seniors residing in West and South Los Angeles.

## **43 health systems ranked by long-term debt**

*Becker's Hospital CFO Report; by Alan Condon; 4/29/24*

Long-term debt has long been a staple in healthcare, but many hospitals and health systems are responding to the increasing cost of debt and debt service in the rising rates environment. Highly levered health systems are looking to sell hospitals, facilities or business lines to reduce their debt leverage and secure long-term sustainability, which creates significant growth opportunities for systems with balance sheets on a more solid financial footing. Forty-three health systems ranked by their long-term debt: ...

## **Technology / Innovations News**

## **CIOs' top 15 priorities over next 3 years**

*Becker's Health IT; by Giles Bruce; 5/1/24*

CIOs' top priority over the next one to three years will be driving business innovation, according to a recent *CIO* survey. That differs from their current No. 1 [focus](#), which is cybersecurity, per an April *CIO* story. Here are the activities CIOs plan to spend more time on in the next one to three years, according to the 2024 [survey](#) of 1,126 IT leaders: ...

## **Prioritizing patient care: Medical technology innovations on the horizon**

*MedCityNews; by Dhaval Shah; 5/1/24*

The MedTech industry is poised for breakthroughs, owing to the rapid integration of digital ecosystems and technologies like AI and cloud. 2023 was a banner year for MedTech, especially in terms of technological innovations. Incidentally, it also witnessed the largest ever number of FDA approvals on novel medical devices in a single year. This list included a number of AI-enabled MedTech products, among others. ... Three key areas are continuing to shape the industry:

1. IoMT [Internet of Medical Things] for connected care ...
2. AI, the better care ally
3. Digital platforms for accessible care delivery

## **FTC makes changes to healthcare breach reporting**

*Becker's Health IT; by Naomi Diza; 4/26/24*

... The changes clarify the rule's scope regarding health apps and similar technologies while expanding the information covered entities must provide to consumers in the event of a breach of their health data, according to an April 26 FTC news release. Under the new rule, vendors of personal health records and related entities not governed by HIPAA are mandated to notify individuals, the FTC and, when applicable, the media, in case of a breach of unsecured personally identifiable health data. Additionally, third-party service providers to vendors of protected health records must inform such vendors and entities upon the discovery of a breach. *[Read for more revisions to the rule.]*

## **Ethics**

## **MultiPlan, insurance giants sued over out-of-network rates**

*Modern Healthcare; by Nona Tepper; 4/29/24*

A rural health system sued technology company MultiPlan and eight of the country's largest insurance companies over alleged schemes to strongarm providers into accepting low out-of-network rates. At issue in the proposed class-action suit are MultiPlan's repricing tools, which allegedly rely on insurers' data to deflate their out-of-network reimbursement payments.

## **Nurse pleads guilty to 22 counts of patient murder, attempted murder**

*Becker's Hospital Review; by Mariah Taylor; 5/2/24*

Heather Pressdee, a Pennsylvania nurse, pleaded guilty to three counts of first-degree murder and 19 counts of attempted homicide, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported May 1. Ms. Pressdee pleaded guilty on May 2 in an ongoing hearing that is expected to go until May 3. She was given three consecutive life sentences and 380 to 760 years consecutively. Ms. Pressdee, 41, was first [charged](#) in May 2023 in connection with the mistreatment of three nursing home patients while working at Quality Life Services in Chicora, Pa., including two counts of homicide and one count of attempted murder. In November, she was charged in connection with the mistreatment of 19 additional patients that were in her care at five different facilities since 2020.

## **Other News**

### **Executive Personnel Changes - 5/3/24**

- [AccentCare](#) appoints Andy Johnston as President, Hospice Personal Care Services (PCS)
- [Ascension](#) (St. Louis-based) named Saurabh Tripathi Executive Vice President and CFO
- [Concierge Care](#) names Jeff Bevis as its next CEO
- [Kaiser Permanente](#) (Oakland, CA) names Sam Glick as Executive Vice President for Enterprise Strategy and Business Development
- [Kaiser Permanente](#) (Oakland, CA) names Shelby Decosta as Chief Business Development Officer
- [Providence Oregon](#) names Jennifer Burrows, RN as Chief Executive, effective May 6

- Opelousas General Health System (OGHS) names Shelly Soileau as the Chief Financial Officer, effective June 3
- St. Luke's Health System taps Michelle Lewis as VP of Revenue Cycle

### Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 5/2/24 per nasdaq.com

- Adus HomeCare (ADUS: \$97.17)
- Amedisys (AMED: \$92.01)
- BrightSpring Health (BTSG: \$10.81)
- Encompass (EHC: \$83.29)
- Enhabit (EHAB: \$10.09)
- Ensign Group (ENSG: \$117.35)
- HCA Healthcare (HCA: \$309.35)
- Humana (HUM: \$319.00)
- Pennant Group (PNTG: \$21.24)
- Vitas / Chemed Corp (CHE: \$562.97)

## Today's Encouragement

**Be like bacon. Bacon makes everything better! - Heard from someone, somewhere on the Food Network**

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