

## Cordt Kassner

---

**From:** Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter  
<subscriptions@hospicepalliativecaretoday.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 6, 2024 4:00 AM  
**To:** Cordt Kassner  
**Subject:** Your Hospice & Palliative Care Today Newsletter for 05/06/24

OUR SPONSORS

[CHAP](#)

[TCG](#)

[LMHPCO](#)

[Composing Life](#)

[Hospice Analytics](#)



**HOSPICE &  
PALLIATIVE CARE  
TODAY**

## May 6th, 2024

### Contents

- [1. HHS finalizes disability access rule for healthcare providers](#)
- [2. Doing the right thing for hospice patients](#)
- [3. Highlighting Nurses Week: From aerospace manufacturing to health care, this hospice nurse found his true calling](#)
- [4. Bon Secours Mercy Health, Compassus finalize hospice and home health partnership](#)
- [5. Thyme Care launches virtual palliative care program, appoints medical director](#)
- [6. Breaking the silence: The mounting need for trauma-informed hospice care](#)
- [7. Cuddle beds bringing comfort and compassion to palliative care](#)
- [8. CMS: Advance health equity during National AANHPI Heritage Month](#)
- [9. Cigna Medicare Advantage sale advances as company raises outlook](#)
- [10. Tenet adds 45 ASCs, sells 9 hospitals in Q1](#)
- [11. Pennant acquires Utah home health and hospice provider](#)

12. Patients, caregivers more willing to spend extra for home-based care, study finds
13. Fallon Health plans to expand inclusive care program into Southeastern Massachusetts
14. Big Bend Hospice, Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare Partner on transformative approach to transitional care
15. Noncompete ban may squeeze rural hospitals, report shows
16. Optum layoffs affect teams in Medicare Advantage I-SNP, IE-SNP business
17. Elara Caring, cited in death of visiting nurse Joyce Grayson, vows to contest violation
18. What Walmart's exit means for the future of telehealth
19. ONC chief: EHRs are central to AI's role in healthcare
20. Updated guidance on workplace harassment covers misgendering pronouns, bias over bathroom use, more
21. Curricular reform in serious illness communication and palliative care: Using medical students' voices to guide change
22. Today's Encouragement: Nursing is an art ...

## Headlines

### **HHS finalizes disability access rule for healthcare providers**

*Modern Healthcare; by Kara Hartnett; 3/2/24*

The Health and Human Services Department finalized a rule that broadens nondiscrimination protections for individuals with disabilities in healthcare environments. ... When the rule takes effect July 1, healthcare organizations will be required to modify facilities and medical equipment to cater to patients' physical and sensory needs. Facilities will have to update features such as elevators and ramps to ensure they are functional and meet federal standards. In addition, healthcare organizations must ensure websites, mobile apps and virtual care programs are user-friendly for people with disabilities and remove disability status as a factor in clinical support tools.

## Hospice Provider News

### **Doing the right thing for hospice patients**

*Journal of Emergency Medical Services; by Abe Tolkoﬀ, EMT, Daniel Tauber, NRP, and Amelia E. Breyre, MD, NRP; 5/2/24*

Here is a novel solution in practice at the Yale New Haven Hospital Center for EMS; a paramedic hospice rotation. After being dispatched to a lift assist call, two novice EMTs proceeded to the address without lights or sirens. They grabbed their gear bag and walked up the stairs to the home. Knocking on the door, they announced “EMS!” and heard a frantic “Come in!” followed by, “he has a DNR.” ...

## **Highlighting Nurses Week: From aerospace manufacturing to health care, this hospice nurse found his true calling**

*St. Louis Post-Dispatch; by Dana Fouchia; 5/1/24*

Kevin Ross didn't start out in health care. Far from it. With a degree in computer science, Ross was using his talents working for an aerospace manufacturer. When a friend's mother, who was a nurse, encouraged him to find a job that brought him joy, he not only listened to her, he also found his life's calling. “I've come to conclude that eventually we need to take care of each other, and we've got to keep that in mind when we have our complaints every day,” Ross said. ...

*Editor's Note: We celebrate Kevin and the many hospice and palliative nurses who--like Kevin--find joy in their chosen work. Honoring Nurses Week, May 6-12, 2024! See "Today's Encouragement" for a quote from Florence Nightingale.*



*Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today*

## **Bon Secours Mercy Health, Compassus finalize hospice and home health partnership**

*PR Newswire; news provided by Bon Secours Mercy Health and Compassus; 5/2/24*

Bon Secours Mercy Health (BSMH), the fifth-largest Catholic health system in the U.S., and Compassus, a leading national provider of innovative home-based health care services, have finalized an agreement to form a joint venture partnership. Compassus will manage 10 home health agencies and 11 hospice operations formerly led by BSMH serving patients in Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, South Carolina and Virginia.

## Palliative Care Provider News

### **Thyme Care launches virtual palliative care program, appoints medical director**

*MobileHealthNews; by Jessica Hagen; 5/2/24*

Value-based cancer care platform Thyme Care is launching Enhanced Supportive Care, a virtual palliative care support program to assist its members and caregivers with managing physical and psychological symptoms accompanying cancer diagnosis and treatment. The program will be led by Dr. Julia Frydman, the company's first medical director for palliative care. Frydman previously worked in the geriatric and palliative medicine program at New York City's Mount Sinai Health System.

## Clinical News

### **Breaking the silence: The mounting need for trauma-informed hospice care**

*Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/3/24*

Traumatized and abused hospice patients and providers often experience an array of lingering physical, emotional and psychological effects that can fall into a silent abyss of unmet needs. ... Many seniors have experienced some form of trauma or abuse in their lifetime. ... More data has become available in recent years around the prevalence of different types of abuse and trauma. Roughly 10% of seniors 65 and older nationwide are victims of some type of abuse each year, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) [reported](#). Caregiver neglect represents 5.1% of these cases, with psychological and physical abuse impacting 4.6% and 1.6% of seniors, respectively. ...

*Editor's Note: This article highlights interviews with Dr. Ashwin Kotwal, assistant professor at the University California San Francisco; Carole Fisher, president, National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI); Dr. Cameron Muir, chief innovation officer, NPHI; Andrea Devoti, executive vice president at the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC); Lindsey Owen, executive director of Disability Rights Vermont.*



**Accelerate Impact**  
**Accelerate Influence**  
**Accelerate Innovation**

*Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today*

## **Cuddle beds bringing comfort and compassion to palliative care**

*WarwickToday [Australia]; by Lucy Waldron; 5/3/24*

The Warwick Hospital has welcomed a double-sized palliative care cuddle bed, generously donated by the Warwick RSL Sub-branch through the Belinda McGowan Foundation. The Belinda McGowan Foundation is dedicated to providing cuddle beds to rural, remote, and regional healthcare facilities, aiming to offer comfort and companionship to patients and their families during palliative care and end-of-life moments.

## **Regulatory News**

### **CMS: Advance health equity during National AANHPI Heritage Month**

*CMS.gov; email 5/2/24*

During May, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Office of Minority Health (CMS OMH) recognizes National Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month by highlighting disparities for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. These communities account for more than 7% of the U.S. population and have the fastest population growth rate among all racial and ethnic groups, having almost doubled since 2000. Between 2017 and 2019, the number of Asian Americans enrolled in Medicare grew by 11%, which was the highest percentage increase in enrollment compared to White, Black, and Hispanic enrollees. ... [Read for more descriptions, data and resources.]

## **Mergers & Acquisition News**

### **Cigna Medicare Advantage sale advances as company raises outlook**

*Modern Healthcare; by Lauren Berryman; 5/2/24*

Cigna Group has taken a big step forward to exit the Medicare Advantage business, a strategy that may pay off given industry headwinds. ... The deal,

announced in January for \$3.3 billion, is on track to close in the first quarter of 2025, he said. Medicare Advantage carriers, including heavyweights CVS Health and Humana, are battling pressures related to higher medical costs, heightened regulatory scrutiny and slower enrollment growth.



## **Tenet adds 45 ASCs, sells 9 hospitals in Q1**

*Becker's Hospital CFO Report; by Alan Condon; 5/1/24*

In the first quarter, Dallas-based Tenet Healthcare sold nine hospitals while its outpatient business United Surgical International Partners acquired 45 ambulatory surgery centers and added 32 service lines. Tenet has increased the number of ASCs in its portfolio to 512 and decreased the number of hospitals it operates to 49, highlighting the company's expectation that its ASC business will drive long-term growth as care continues to shift from inpatient to outpatient settings. Tenet posted a net income of \$2.2 billion in the first quarter — up from \$143 million in the same period last year — and aims to spend about \$250 million a year on ASC mergers and acquisitions.

## **Pennant acquires Utah home health and hospice provider**

*Pennant Group Press Release, Eagle, Idaho; 5/1/24*

The Pennant Group, Inc., the parent company of the Pennant group of affiliated home health, hospice, home care and senior living companies, today announced that it has acquired South Davis Home Health and South Davis Hospice (“South Davis”), which provides skilled home health and hospice services in Davis County, Utah. “This acquisition provides us with an opportunity to further expand in the state of Utah, and will complement our agencies throughout central and northern Utah,” said Brent Guerisoli, Chief Executive Officer of Pennant.

## **Post-Acute Care News**

### **Patients, caregivers more willing to spend extra for home-based care, study finds**

*McKnights Home Care; by Adam Healy; 4/30/24*

[According to a new study published in *JAMA Network Open*:] ... On average,

respondents were willing to spend an extra \$51.81 for care that takes place in the home, compared to facility-based care such as that in a skilled nursing facility. They were also more willing to pay more for care that can reduce their recovery time or reduce caregivers' burden. Caregivers, meanwhile, also prioritized higher-quality care, even if it came with a heftier price tag.



## **Fallon Health plans to expand inclusive care program into Southeastern Massachusetts**

*SouthCoast Today, The Standard-Times; by Kathryn Gallerani; 5/3/24*

Fallon Health, a not-for-profit healthcare services organization based in Worcester with more than 45 years of experience providing care, has plans to open a new Summit ElderCare PACE Center in Dartmouth by the end of this year. PACE, a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, provides services to adults 55 and older, including adults with complex medical needs, so they can age with dignity in their home or community. It's the biggest PACE program in Massachusetts. ... The other Massachusetts Fallon PACE locations are in Webster, Lowell, Leominster and Springfield. Fallon also has a PACE in western New York.

## **Big Bend Hospice, Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare Partner on transformative approach to transitional care**

*Business Wire; 5/2/24*

Big Bend Hospice (BBH) and Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (TMH) announced a partnership today to improve patient navigation within the healthcare system. This collaboration aims to streamline transitions between hospitals, doctor's offices, rehabilitation centers, and home care. The signing of the Affiliation Agreement creates a governance structure that will develop a transformative approach to improving *transitions of care* in the Big Bend community. *Transitions*

*of care* involve a patient's movement between healthcare settings, such as doctor's offices, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, long-term care, home health, hospice, etc. This partnership establishes a network of connected healthcare services, creating a seamless patient journey regardless of specific needs.

### **Noncompete ban may squeeze rural hospitals, report shows**

*Modern Healthcare; by Alex Kacik; 5/2/24*

The federal noncompete ban may squeeze rural nonprofit hospitals that continue to see labor costs rise, a new report shows. Last week, the Federal Trade Commission [voted to finalize a rule](#) preventing most employers from enforcing or issuing contracts that restrict employees from working for a competitor. ... Larger hospitals are more likely to have the [financial flexibility](#) to offer clinicians and staff higher wages, likely at the expense of [smaller, rural hospitals](#), Fitch Senior Director Kevin Holloran said.



TURNING DATA INTO INFORMATION – TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

*Sponsor of Hospice & Palliative Care Today*

### **Optum layoffs affect teams in Medicare Advantage I-SNP, IE-SNP business**

*Skilled Nursing News; by Zahida Siddiqu; 5/2/24*

Optum is paring back its workforce, including in the parts of the business related to Medicare Advantage plans for nursing home and assisted living residents. ... The recent layoffs at Optum number hundreds of people across various parts of the company, according to multiple news reports. The company is discontinuing its virtual care business, as Endpoints first confirmed. ... Multiple sources have shared that out of a roughly 20% to 30% of a 400-person workforce [in IE-SNP business] has been laid off in this part of Optum. ... The reduction in staff was across the board from senior leaders on the clinical end to low-level employees, industry sources said.



## **Elara Caring, cited in death of visiting nurse Joyce Grayson, vows to contest violation**

*McKnights Home Care; by Adam Healy; 5/3/24*

The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has cited home health, hospice and personal care provider Elara Caring for failing to provide adequate safeguards to protect visiting nurse Joyce Grayson from workplace violence. Grayson, a licensed practical nurse, was killed last Oct. 28 while providing a home health visit for a client living in a halfway house in Willimantic, CT. The DOL disclosed this week that its OSHA division cited New England Home Care, where Grayson worked, and Jordan Health Care Inc., which both do business as Elara Caring, with a "Willful-Serious" citation. Elara Caring faces up to \$163,627 in penalties resulting from the citation. ...

## **Technology / Innovations News**

### **What Walmart's exit means for the future of telehealth**

*Modern Helathcare; Brock E.W. Turner; 5/3/24*

There is a dark cloud hovering over virtual care as big companies have struggled to launch telehealth-centric businesses. Retail giant Walmart announced Tuesday it was closing all of its clinics and shuttering its virtual care platform. The decision impacted 51 clinics across five states and represents a sharp reversal of a five-year strategy. ... Here is what five telehealth executives and investors had to say about recent challenges in virtual care. ...

### **ONC chief: EHRs are central to AI's role in healthcare**

*Modern Healthcare; by Brock E.W. Turner; 5/2/24*

Even as the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology celebrates its 20th birthday, the agency has little time these days to stop and smell the roses. ... [This article discusses the following questions.]

- What has been ONC's biggest evolution over the past 20 years? ...
- What are the biggest challenges looking ahead to the next 20 years? ...
- Is there adequate competition among electronic health record vendors? ...
- What's the biggest misconception about ONC's role? ...

## **General News**

## Updated guidance on workplace harassment covers misgendering pronouns, bias over bathroom use, more

*McKnights Senior Living; by Kathleen Steele Gaivin; 5/2/24*

Final guidance published last week by the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission aims to clarify for employers, employees and others their obligations related to harassment in the workplace. ... This is the first update to the guidance in 25 years, aimed at enforcing more recent changes in federal law. EEOC clarified that harassment by any person — including employers, coworkers, customers and clients — can violate federal law. ... According to the EEOC, the new guidance “updates, consolidates and replaces the agency’s five guidance documents issued between 1987 and 1999 and serves as a single, unified agency resource on EEOC-enforced workplace harassment law.” Among other guidance, the EEOC calls out asking intrusive questions about a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, gender transition or intimate body parts as forms of harassment. ...

## Education

### Curricular reform in serious illness communication and palliative care: Using medical students' voices to guide change

*Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges; by Jennifer A Reidy, Kate Brizzi, Stephanie H Chan, Hollis Day, Scott K Epstein, Melissa Fischer, Priya S Garg, Anna Gosline, Carolina Jaramillo, Emma Livne, Suzanne Mitchell, Sarah Morgan, Molly W Olmsted, Patricia Stebbins, Isabella Stumpf, Tamara Vesel, Irene M Yeh, Megan E Young, Roberta E Goldman; 5/1/24*

**Purpose:** To gather and leverage the voices of students to drive creation of required, integrated palliative care curricula within undergraduate medical education in Massachusetts, which is lacking in a majority of U.S. medical schools.

**Conclusions:** This study confirms long-standing themes on students' experiences with SIC and palliative care topics, including feeling inadequately prepared to care for seriously ill patients as future physicians. Our study collected students' perspectives as actionable data to develop recommendations for curricular change.

## Today's Encouragement

**Nursing is an art: and if it is to be made an art, it requires an exclusive devotion as hard a preparation as any painter's or scultor's work. - Florence Nightingale**

*Editor's Note: Hospice & Palliative Care Today joins you in celebrating National Nurses Week May 6-12, 2024!*

***Sign up for our free daily newsletters [here!](#)***

***The Fine Print:***

**Paywalls:** Some links may take readers to articles that either require registration or are behind a paywall. **Disclaimer:** Hospice & Palliative Care Today provides brief summaries of news stories of interest to hospice, palliative, and end-of-life care professionals (typically taken directly from the source article). Hospice & Palliative Care Today is not responsible or liable for the validity or reliability of information in these articles and directs the reader to authors of the source articles for questions or comments. Additionally, Dr. Cordt Kassner, Publisher, and Dr. Joy Berger, Editor in Chief, welcome your [feedback](#) regarding content of Hospice & Palliative Care Today. **Unsubscribe:** Hospice & Palliative Care Today is a free subscription email. If you believe you have received this email in error, or if you no longer wish to receive Hospice & Palliative Care Today, please unsubscribe [here](#) or reply to this email with the message "Unsubscribe". Thank you.