

**Cordt Kassner**

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**May 17th, 2024**

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## **Hospice Provider News**

## **Emerging leaders in hospice and palliative care**

*AAHPM - American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine; webpage source for various press releases of individuals; 5/24*

AAHPM developed the Emerging Leaders in Hospice and Palliative Care program to recognize the exceptional work accomplished by the next generation of leaders and bring increased exposure to the specialty of hospice and palliative medicine. In 2014, the first class of Emerging Leaders was named. AAHPM seeks to recognize accomplished early career professionals and the next generation of hospice and palliative care leaders. This award recognizes new Emerging Leaders in recognition of their career accomplishments, involvement in the Academy, mentoring of residents and students, and participation in charitable work. [Click on the title's link for the list of 36 honorees.]

*Editor's Note: Do you work with or know any of these honorees? If so, please share this with them and your colleagues, along with congratulations from [Hospice & Palliative Care Today!](#) (Invite them to [register for free](#)--no strings attached--to our daily newsletter.)*

## **Clinical News**

### **Psychological trauma can worsen symptom burden at end-of-life**

*Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/15/24*

Recent research has found that traumatic experiences can lead to increased pain and symptom burden at the end of life, along with a greater likelihood of emotional suffering and isolation. Collective trauma experiences have been associated with higher instances of pain and dyspnea among more than half of seniors nationwide, a recent study found, published in the Journal of Pain and Symptom Management. Traumatized seniors are also more likely to experience loneliness, dissatisfaction with their life and depression. ... Hospices need a greater understanding of both the depth of these patients' suffering and the scope of their unique needs to improve trauma-informed care delivery, [Dr. Ashwin] Kotwal said, assistant professor of medicine at the University of California San Francisco's (UCSF) Division of Geriatrics.

### **10 most common sentinel events in 2023: Joint Commission**

*Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Mackenzie Bean; 5/15/24*

In 2023, patient falls were once again the most common sentinel event reported

by healthcare organizations, according to a May 15 [report](#) from The Joint Commission. The Joint Commission defines a sentinel event as a patient safety event that results in death, permanent harm, severe temporary harm or intervention required to sustain life. ... The 10 most frequently reported sentinel events for 2023:

1. Falls — 48% *[the other sentinel events are only at 8% or lower]* ...

*Editor's Note: Persons receiving hospice care can be especially vulnerable to high risks for falls. The person and/or caregiver/family members can be unaware to signs of decreased mobility, balance paired with cluttered floors and pathways. Changes in medication can affect blood pressure, dizziness, cognition, and more. Education is the key: for **all** interdisciplinary team members, caregivers, and family members. Social workers and chaplains can address emotional and spiritual dynamics of accepting limitations, fears of "giving up or giving in," finding quality of life, changing patient/caregiving needs and solutions, and more. What does your Quality data report about sentinel events, especially falls?*

### **Providing culturally sensitive palliative care to children with cancer: A conversation with Justin Baker, MD**

*The ASCO Post; by Rikki Camarillo; 5/16/24*

In the fall of 2023, Justin Baker, MD, took on the role of Chief of the Division of Quality of Life and Pediatric Palliative Care and Director of the Quality of Life for All Program, Stanford Medicine Children's Health, Stanford, California. He formerly worked at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, as Chief of the Quality of Life and Palliative Care Division. The ASCO Post recently spoke with Dr. Baker about his new role in palliative care for the treatment of children with cancer at Stanford Children's and the importance of culturally sensitive care for patients and their families.

## **Public Policy News**

### **VA Committee leaders unveil bipartisan veterans package**

*House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; by Kathleen McCarthy; 5/14/24*

House and Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs leaders Chairman Mike Bost (R-Ill.), Chairman Jon Tester (D-Mont.), and Ranking Member Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), introduced H.R. 8371, *the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare*

*and Benefits Improvement Act.* This legislation includes a number of bipartisan and bicameral proposals to reform and improve the delivery of healthcare, benefits, and services at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans, their families, and their survivors. ... *The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act* is supported by a growing list of the following organizations: The American Legion [TAL] ... Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), ... Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), ... National PACE Association, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), Hospice Action Network (HAN), and [many more].

## **Mergers & Acquisition News**

### **Jefferson-Lehigh Valley Health merger process moves forward**

*Modern Healthcare; by Caroline Hudson; 5/15/24*

Jefferson Health and Lehigh Valley Health Network have taken a major step toward completing their proposed merger. The two health systems have signed a definitive agreement to merge, according to a Wednesday news release. The organizations said they plan to create a \$15 billion regional nonprofit system with more than 65,000 employees, which will operate 30 hospitals and more than 700 care sites in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The health systems expect the deal to close this summer, pending regulatory approval, according to the news release.

### **Vitas' acquisition pipeline likely growing**

*Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 5/15/24*

Vitas Healthcare, a subsidiary of Chemed Corp. is gearing up for potential acquisitions. ... VITAS is targeting its home state of Florida and other Certificate of Need (CON) states for potential deals, Michael Witzeman, vice president, CFO and controller at Chemed said during the Bank of America Securities Health Care Conference. "We certainly think that there's a pipeline growing, and we have the resources on our balance sheet with cash and no debt to be able to really be a player in any of these," Witzeman said. "We would like to be in states that have CON restrictions much more than an unrestricted state, but we certainly have the interesting inability when things come available to be able to jump on them."

...

## Post-Acute Care News

### **Aveanna is looking to grow in its 'rightsized' home health segment again**

*Home Health Care News; by Andrew Donlan; 5/14/24*

Aveanna Healthcare Holdings leaders believe the company is back at a place where it can bank on near-term growth in its Medicare-certified home health business. It first entered into a business "transformation" in January 2023, and that transformation is already paying dividends, according to CEO Jeff Shaner. But much of the turnaround has been led by the private-duty services segment. Now, Shaner sees a path for the company to begin accelerating its home health and hospice lines. ... Based in Atlanta, Aveanna provides home-based care services to pediatric and senior populations in 33 states. Its segments include private-duty nursing, home health and hospice, and medical solutions.

### **PACE program officially launches in Greater Peoria area**

*OSF HealthCare, Peoria, IL; by Nathan Pritzker; 5/14/24*

It's a new and exciting day for older adults receiving health care services in the Greater Peoria area. After months of preparation, the state of Illinois and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have awarded OSF HealthCare a contract to be one of the first in the state to offer Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). Enrollment for the program, known as OSF PACE, is currently underway with services officially beginning June 1. "OSF PACE will really help the people in the Tri-County area stay in their home and community," says Nathan Pritzker, executive director of OSF PACE.

## Ethics

### **When doctors withhold futile treatments, that isn't 'assisted dying'**

*The Guardian; by Dr. James Haslam, consultant in intensive care medicine and anaesthesia; 5/15/24*

[Commentary / Letter] I write in response to Dr. Jagat Aulakh's letter (A form of assisted dying already happens in hospitals, 8 May). It must be made clear that withholding or withdrawing futile treatments is not and never has been assisted dying. Stopping – or not starting – treatments that are not wanted, are not working or are not worthwhile is good medicine and the law of the land. Whereas "assisted dying" is the modern euphemism for physician-assisted

suicide and euthanasia, both forms of medicalised killing [*the author's choice of words*]. ... Intentions are important. ...

*Editor's Note: This thoughtful response puts forth ethical support against Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD), also known as "physician assisted suicide." Likely, you experience extremely opposite perspectives among your hospice and palliative employees, board, community, and more personally among your family and friends. As hospice and palliative leaders, we must address this issue with respectful dialogue, critical thinking, professional case studies, personal experiences, beliefs and values, empathy, and humanity.*

## General News

### **The top Affordable Care Act reporting mistakes we continue to see in 2024**

*HR Blog; by Eric Gregory; 5/13/24*

... There are a number of mistakes—some simple and some not-so-simple—that employers should avoid to prevent receiving a panic-inducing assessment letter from the IRS.

1. Failure to Indicate that Minimum Essential Coverage Was Offered to Full-time Employees ...
2. Ignoring Correspondence from the IRS ...
3. Failure to File Altogether
4. Failure to Show Reasonable Cause
5. Failure to Consider All Entities of an "ALE Group"

### **A Review of "Heartwood: The Art of Living with the End in Mind" by Barbara Becker**

*CU Anschutz; by Darcy Campbell, AGNP-D, ACHPN; 5/14/24*

This year, one of our [small group] readings was the book, Heartwood; The Art of Living with the End in Mind, by interfaith pastor Barbara Becker. The book is composed of small vignettes from her life that explore death and dying. Many of her experiences as a hospice volunteer are captured as well. Her book was to be about death, but she learned that in writing about death she really explored what it means to live. Heartwood is the inner core of a tree. While dead it does not decay as it is supported by the outer living rings of the tree. Becker, describes Heartwood as the ideal metaphor for our life, "where life and death cannot

exist separately from each other." ... Working in palliative care, we too are forced to look at our own mortality.

## Other News

### Executive Personnel Changes - 5/17/24

- Crystal Coast House in Newport appointed Charlie Miller as Executive Director
- Mount Carmel Health System, part of Livonia, MI-based Trinity Health, named Tauana McDonald president and CEO, effective July 1.
- Mount Sinai's Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine appoint Robert M. Arnold, MD Vice Chair for Professional Development
- Phoenix Children's has named Blake Bulloch, MD as Chief Medical Officer.
- [Org] names [Person] as [Title]

### Other Business Headlines of Interest, updated 5/16/24 per nasdaq.com

- Adus HomeCare (ADUS: \$110.29)
- Amedisys (AMED: \$94.95)
- BrightSpring Health (BTSG: \$11.40)
- Encompass (EHC: \$85.44)
- Enhabit (EHAB: \$8.35)
- Ensign Group (ENSG: \$119.19)
- HCA Healthcare (HCA: \$322.71)
- Humana (HUM: \$355.19)
- Pennant Group (PNTG: \$22.41)
- Vitas / Chemed Corp (CHE: \$568.37)

## Today's Encouragement

**Purpose / Benefit / Check. ~Peter Benjamin, quoted at the Homecare & Hospice Association of Colorado Annual Conference**

- Purpose: I'm calling because...

- Benefit: This will help you by...
- Check: May I proceed?

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