

Cordt Kassner

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<subscriptions@hospicepalliativecaretoday.com>
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TODAY

June 9th, 2024

Sunday newsletters focus on headlines and top read stories of the last week (in order) - enjoy!

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Contents

- [1. Normandy Welcomes World War II Heroes - 80th Anniversary](#)
- [2. Behavioral health patients a challenge to nursing homes](#)
- [3. Get to know us even before you need us](#)
- [4. Oregon reviews UnitedHealth deal for Amedisys home health, hospice](#)
- [5. Controversial conversations: Key takeaways from The Jeffrey Fudin Debates on pain and palliative care practices](#)
- [6. Hawai'i is the first state to provide palliative care coverage](#)

7. [How hospice valuations are shaping up in 2024](#)
8. [National aging framework outlines governmentwide initiatives promoting home-based care](#)
9. [The state of the hospice nursing workforce](#)
10. [Hospice of Santa Barbara celebrates 50 years with its Legacy of Compassion Campaign and a strong commitment to the future](#)
11. [LeadingAge: CMS on right track with high-acuity hospice RFI](#)
12. [Joel Mekler - Medicare Moments: Watch out for these latest scams](#)
13. [Today's Encouragement](#)

Headlines

Normandy Welcomes World War II Heroes - 80th Anniversary

U.S. Department of Defense; 6/4/24

World War II veterans met with cheers and applause from throngs of well-wishers as they arrived in Normandy, France, for events commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day. ... The number of these heroes at D-Day anniversary events in Normandy each year is diminishing, but the gratitude and awe for their service and sacrifice endures.

We Honor Veterans - NHPCO

NHPCO; retrieved from the internet on 6/5/24

We Honor Veterans empowers end-of-life care partners to meet the unique needs of America's Veterans and their families. Our guidance and resources are focused on respectful inquiry, compassionate listening and grateful acknowledgment so that veterans can be guided through their life stories toward a more peaceful ending.

Editor's Note: Thank you NHPCO for your foresight in developing this program! You identified the massive generation of WWII veterans we would lose within a window of two decades. You educated hospice organizations nation-wide and equipped us with relevant resources, while we still had time to provide meaningful support. (Today's average age of surviving WWII veterans is 100.)

- *For readers, reach out to a veteran (whatever the generation)--or the family of a veteran--to express your thanks for their service.*
- *For a documentary from the History Channel, watch [D-Day at Pointe-Du-Hoc](#).*
- *For the life-story of a D-Day veteran, read (or listen to) [Len Lomell: D-Day Hero](#), by Steven Gillon (History Channel). "Lomell was praised by Stephen Ambrose as*

the single most important person in the success of D-Day after General Eisenhower." Post-war, Len "Bud" Lomell became a lawyer, humbly devoting his vocation to peace and advocacy for underserved populations. His daughter--The Reverend Dr. Georgine Lomell Buckwalter--devoted her life to senior care chaplaincy, pioneering pastoral care for Memory Care in nursing homes and senior care communities.

Behavioral health patients a challenge to nursing homes

Modern Healthcare; by Diane Eastabrook; 6/4/24

Challenges providing care for nursing home patients with mental health and behavioral health issues are adding to discharge bottlenecks for hospitals, and the demand for such care has led some facilities to set up specialized units with additional staff just for those patients.

Editor's Note: Hospice and palliative care leaders, what end-of-life, mental health and behavioral health specific education do you provide for your clinical teams, your volunteers, and family caregivers? For starters, you need to include dementia care training such as "[Validation Therapy](#)" by Naomi Feil and/or the "[Positive Approach to Care](#)" by Teepa Snow. For mental illness, examine the journal article "[End-of-Life Care in Individuals with Serious Mental Illness](#)." [Click here to "Get Involved with Your Local Chapter"](#) of the national Alzheimer's Association.

Get to know us even before you need us

[WV] The Journal; by Nikki Bigiarelli; 6/2/24

Every day, we make decisions about how we want to live. What is most often not considered is how we want to live at the end of life. We can avoid a lot of uncertainty when we talk to those we love about our goals of care and end-of-life wishes before we encounter a serious illness.

Publisher's Note: Helpful community outreach. Nikki Bigiarelli, CHPN, BSN, RN, is CEO of Hospice of the Panhandle.



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Oregon reviews UnitedHealth deal for Amedisys home health, hospice

The Lund Report; by Nick Budnick; 6/4/24

State officials are asking members of the public to weigh in on the proposed acquisition of Amedisys — a hospice and home health and company that operates in Roseburg, Salem and Portland — by an increasingly controversial health care giant called UnitedHealth Group. Inc. UnitedHealth operates Optum, a subsidiary whose takeover of a clinic chain in the Eugene area has sparked numerous complaints. The state recently approved the company's acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic, an 11-clinic company operating in three counties. Now, it proposes to take over the Oregon offices of a Amedisys, a publicly traded firm, and the transaction has federal officials contemplating a lawsuit to block it. UnitedHealth and Optum are under increasing scrutiny for their market dominance and allegations of anticompetitive conduct.

Controversial conversations: Key takeaways from The Jeffrey Fudin Debates on pain and palliative care practices

Pharmacy Times; Interview with Lee Kral, PharmD, FASHP, NBC-HWC, CPMC, CPE; 6/5/24

In an interview with the *Pharmacy Times*®, Lee Kral, PharmD, FASHP, NBC-HWC, CPMC, CPE, clinical pharmacy specialist of pain management at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, shares her insights into pain management in palliative care for patients with cancer-related chronic pain. She highlights the crucial role of pharmacists in managing patient treatment regimens, including administration of opioids, the role of off-label prescribing, and the potential of deprescribing to improve patients' quality of life.

Hawai'i is the first state to provide palliative care coverage

EIN Presswire; by Governor Josh Green, MD; 6/4/24

Governor Josh Green, M.D., and the Department of Human Services (DHS) Med-QUEST Division are pleased to announce that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved a new State Plan Amendment (SPA) to cover community palliative care services through Medicaid, making Hawai'i the first state in the nation to do so. ... "After several years of hard work and collaboration with many community members and experts in the field, I am proud to announce that Med-QUEST is the first Medicaid program in the country to get this benefit approved," said Governor Green. "This will greatly improve the

quality of life and health outcomes for thousands of people who face serious medical conditions in our state. Hawai'i continues to lead the nation in innovations in health and health care."



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How hospice valuations are shaping up in 2024

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 5/30/24

When it comes to hospice acquisitions, buyers' and sellers' expectations on price tags are becoming more aligned. A surge of deals in 2021 and 2022 led to record-high valuations in the space with multiples reaching in excess of 30x in some instances. While many buyers were willing to pay that premium, some stepped out of the market due to the high valuations. But deal volume has largely declined in late 2023 and early 2024, and valuations are starting to come down.

National aging framework outlines governmentwide initiatives promoting home-based care

McKnight's Home Care; by Adam Healy; 6/3/24

The Department of Health and Human Services released a new framework for its [National Plan on Aging](#) on Thursday. The framework aims to guide a multifaceted, governmentwide approach to help caregivers and home- and community-based service providers enable older adults to age comfortably in place.

The state of the hospice nursing workforce


Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 5/28/24

Honing clinical scheduling and onboarding models is key to sustaining the hospice nurse workforce as demand for these clinicians rises and wages lag compared to those in other settings. Future generations of health care clinicians may be woefully unprepared to address both the quantity and the complexity of emotional, physical and spiritual needs among a swelling aging population nearing the end of life.



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JULY 24-26, 2024

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Hospice of Santa Barbara celebrates 50 years with its Legacy of Compassion Campaign and a strong commitment to the future

Santa Barbara Independent; by Hospice of Santa Barbara; 6/3/24

When Hospice of Santa Barbara (HSB) officially opened its doors in 1974, it was at the forefront of a visionary movement. Only one other hospice existed in the United States at the time and a local group of Santa Barbara leaders committed to meeting the needs of people and families struggling with life-threatening illness or grieving the death of a loved one. Over the past 50 years, HSB has served tens of thousands of people. ... During this time, HSB has repeatedly adapted and grown to meet the changing needs of our community including the many community crises and disasters our community has faced. ... [As] HSB looks to their next 50 years, they see a changing landscape that greatly impacts their mission.

Editor's Note: Congratulations Hospice of Santa Barbara! Thank you for pioneering our hospice movement 50 years ago and for continuing to grow and evolve your services through ongoing changes. The "one other hospice" that existed in the U.S. is Connecticut Hospice, which also continues to lead the way. Congratulations and thanks to you, too!

LeadingAge: CMS on right track with high-acuity hospice RFI

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 5/31/24

The senior care advocacy group LeadingAge has praised the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) inquiries into high-acuity palliative care, but expressed concern over reimbursement and staffing issues. The agency's 2025 proposed hospice rule featured a series of requests for information (RFI) on issues like health equity, social determinants of health and future quality measures. The RFIs contain further questions about the utilization of higher-cost palliative treatments under the Medicare Hospice Benefit. The agency posed similar queries in its proposed rule for 2024. The new proposal seeks greater clarity on the financial risks and costs that providers say represent barriers to providing those services, such as palliative chemotherapy, radiation blood transfusions or dialysis, among others.

Joel Mekler - Medicare Moments: Watch out for these latest scams

New Castle News; by Joel Mekler; 6/3/24

... Across the country, many unscrupulous hospice providers are recruiting and enrolling nonterminally ill patients for end-of-life care they do not need and then billing Medicare for services and items they may never receive. They trick beneficiaries into signing up for hospice by offering freebies, such as additional groceries, nurse visits, durable medical equipment, bus coupons, and more once they enroll. They also make false claims, such as saying "Medicare now covers cooking and cleaning services". Or they tell beneficiaries they qualify due to age, saying "You're now old enough to qualify for hospice!" Another tactic is giving money, with some recruiters telling beneficiaries, "You can earn \$400/month if you agree to enroll in our program." ... Tips [to consumers] to avoid hospice fraud:

- Beware of hospice companies enrolling patients who do not have a terminal illness with 6 months or less to live. Medicare's hospice benefit is only for those who are terminally ill.
- Don't get tricked by hospice companies offering free services such as housekeeping and cooking. Medicare does not pay for this!
- Watch out for "freebies", such as bus coupons, medical equipment, food supplements, or even payment for enrolling into hospice. These are all scams.



Today's Encouragement

When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. ~ Viktor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning



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