

## Cordt Kassner

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## June 19th, 2024

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## Headlines

### **Dangerous heat puts tens of millions in the US on alert; paired with NIH & OSHA resources for you to protect patients and employees**

*Associated Press article, paired with information and resources from NIH and OSHA; 6/18/24*

- **AP: Dangerous heat puts tens of millions in the US on alert. New York activates the National Guard.** Extreme heat alerts affected tens of millions of people in the United States on Tuesday as cities including Chicago broke records at the start of a week of sweltering weather. States in the Midwest started to bake Monday in what the National Weather Service called a dangerous and long duration heat wave that was expected to stretch from Iowa to Maine into at least Friday.
- **NIH: Hot weather safety for older adults.** *National Institute for Health. Use this information and resources to protect the elderly patients you serve.*
- **OSHA: Heat - Working in outdoor and indoor heat environments.** *OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Use this extensive information and these resources to protect your employees and volunteers.*

### **Congratulations NHPCO and HAN award winners**

*NHPCO; Press Release; 6/13/24*

HAN presented three MyHospice Ambassador annual awards:

- 2023 Impactful Voice Award: Elleah Kes Tooker, Project Management Specialist, Indiana University School of Medicine

- 2023 Mentor of the Year: Paul Ledford, President & CEO, Florida Hospice & Palliative Care Association
- 2023 Ambassador of the Year: Tim Ingram, EVP of Interoperability, Axxess

New this year was the presentation of two inaugural awards:

- 2024 Advocate for Change Award – an award which celebrates a standout individual who boldly tackles challenges in their community by identifying and championing legislative solutions. This year’s honoree is Denise Formolo, Dickinson County Veteran Service Officer and Vice President of the Michigan Association of County Veteran Counselors who identified the issue that led to the creation of H.R. 234/ S. 1330 “Gerald’s Law Act;” a bill which was advocated for during Hospice Action Week.
- 2024 Courageous Conversations Award – this recognition is presented, when merited, to a standout individual who has inspired and educated the public on the value of hospice. This year’s honoree is former US President Jimmy Carter who sparked a national dialogue when he made the courageous decision to publicly share that he elected hospice care for his end-of-life journey.

The 2024 NHPCO Council of States Trailblazer Award recognizes state organizations demonstrating high levels of excellence, innovation, and leadership that expand access to hospice and palliative care, promote quality, and increase awareness. This year’s honorees are:

- Kokua Mau, Hawaii
- California Hospice and Palliative Care Association

## Hospice Provider News

**East Anglia's Childrens Hospice releases heartwarming film: Ten-year-old "wants to show other children that hospice isn't a scary place"**

*EACH - East Anglia's Children's Hospices, United Kingdom; 6/17/24*

"What's particularly special is that it was initiated by Charlotte. She told us she wanted to be part of a film, to show other children that a hospice isn't a scary

place," [said Simon Hemsall, EACH.] ... A powerful new film has been released to showcase the work of a children's hospice through the eyes of a spirited ten-year-old receiving care. Charlotte Freegard stars in the three-minute production, speaking about her experiences at The Treehouse , in Ipswich [United Kingdom]. "The fact we've been able to work with her family to make this a reality is something we're very grateful for. "Hopefully it helps many other children and families, both now and in the future."

*Editor's Note: This article refers to "Children's Hospice Week." This observance is in the United Kingdom, June 17-23, 2024. Similarly, Germany will celebrate "Children's Hospice Day" on February 10, 2025. For the U.S., we are finding that "Childhood Cancer Month" will be in September 2024 and "Children's Grief Awareness Day" will bill November 21, 2024.*

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## Palliative Care Provider News

### **Center for Hospice Care launches 'Kaleidoscope' Palliative Care Program**

*Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 6/17/24*

The Indiana-based Center for Hospice Care (CHC) has unveiled a new palliative care program, branded as Kaleidoscope. Kaleidoscope is designed to provide patients with interdisciplinary palliative care in the home setting. Their care model includes services from nurse practitioners, palliative care nurses, community health workers, spiritual care providers and volunteers. The nonprofit also provides palliative care in a clinic setting at its Center for Palliative Care. "Kaleidoscope is a community-based palliative care program where we're seeing patients in the privacy of their own home," CHC Medical Director Karissa

Misner told local news. “We also still have palliative care in a clinic setting. Now we’re able to offer two different entities for people that still want to go out to a doctor’s appointment.”

### **Palliative care nurses share precious lessons learned after decades working with the dying**

*News.com.au [Australia]; by Jessica Wang; 6/16/24*

After taking care of terminal patients who are facing death for 35 years, Sydney nurse Cindy Grundy has learned a lesson or two about living. Her most cherished is to “guard your time” and treat it like the invaluable commodity that it is, says the palliative care nurse, who works in an inner-city public hospital. “To me, time is everything. It’s so precious,” the 59-year-old said. “You need to learn how to prioritise things and let go of the things that don’t matter. I appreciate the smaller things in life from working in this job but time is a big thing for me.” ... At the heart of what she does, and other palliative care nurses do, is make sure patients can get the most out of the last few hours, days, weeks or months of life – whether that’s through managing their symptoms or fulfilling their last wishes. “They’re dying but they’re still alive and that’s a chance for laughter, love and new experiences,” says fellow Sydney-based nurse Steven Turk.

## **Clinical News**

### **Telehealth can broaden reach of palliative care for lung cancer patients, per MGH study**

*MedCity News; by Frank Vinluan; 6/16/24*

Palliative care provided by video was equivalent to in-person visits with a clinician, according to study results presented during the recent annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Investigators say these results indicate telehealth can make palliative care accessible to more cancer patients. ... [Guidelines of ASCO](#) and other professional organizations recommend integrating palliative care from the time of a diagnosis of advanced cancer. Nevertheless, many patients don’t get this care, Greer said. On the clinician side, there are not enough specially trained palliative care clinicians, he explained. From the patient perspective, living in a rural area or lacking transportation can make it difficult to access such care.



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## **Dying of heart failure: how do we improve the experience?**

*The Medical Journal of Australia - MJA; by Dominica Zentner, Vithoosharan Sivanathan, Jennifer Philip and Natasha Smallwood; published online 6/17/24*

... Despite the improvements afforded by multiple pharmacological, surgical and interventional developments in heart failure, the goal of therapy remains delayed disease progression for many. Cognisant of this reality, recent heart failure guidelines all highlight the important role of palliative care.

... The *MJA* recently published an article regarding the imperative of reframing palliative care. ... We suggest that ...

- All health care students and advanced medical trainees (irrespective of specialty) receive training in key domains of palliative care, ...
- General practitioners should be recognised for the essential role they play in caring for older [patients] ...
- Nurse practitioners and community-based nurses are highly trained and well placed to deliver both heart failure and palliative care. Their importance as part of a multidisciplinary team aiming to deliver care at home is paramount.
- Giving priority to codesigned research that examines people's preferences for care in late-stage chronic disease ...
- Transitioning the existing workforce of cardiologists to being an essential part of the multidisciplinary team providing a palliative approach is required ...
- Professional and societal expectations need to evolve, embracing the notion that achieving a good death may be an excellent outcome in chronic disease.

## **New AMA president says he's ready to take on big challenges facing doctors amid payment cuts and rising burnout rates**

*Fierce Healthcare; by Emma Beavins; 6/13/24*

Bruce Scott, M.D., took the reins of the American Medical Association (AMA) for his first full day on Wednesday, June 12, succeeding immediate past president Jesse Ehrenfeld, M.D. ... During his tenure, Scott said he wants to emphasize the things that unite providers rather than the things that divide them. ... Some of the AMA's biggest policy priorities include reducing prior authorization, bolstering Medicare payments for physicians and tamping down on increased scope of practice by non-physician providers. Scott said he hopes to follow in the steps of Ehrenfeld in engaging policymakers on these topics. In addition to banding together on those cross-discipline issues, Scott wants to advocate for rural clinics.

#### **4 percent of those aged 65+ have dementia diagnoses: report**

*McKnight's Senior Living; by Kimberly Bonvissuto; 6/14/24*

Four percent of US adults aged 65 or more years have a dementia diagnosis, with rates of dementia increasing with age, according to newly released data. Data from the 2022 National Health Interview Survey, or NHIS, revealed that the rate of dementia diagnoses ranged from 1.7% for adults aged 65 to 74 years to 13.1% in those 85 and older, according to the [National Health Statistics Reports](#) issue released Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ... Among all residential care communities, 42% of residents have diagnoses of Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, according to the report. By comparison, 31% had heart disease, and 29% had depression.





## Regulatory News

### **Sens. Warren, Markey propose bill that would lead to prison time for 'corporate greed' in health care**

*Fox News [reported by KFF Health News]; by Landon Mion; 6/12/24*

The Corporate Crimes Against Health Care Act would create a new criminal penalty that could land executives in prison for up to six years. Massachusetts Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, both Democrats, introduced legislation Tuesday that would result in prison time for violators of "corporate greed" in health care. The Corporate Crimes Against Health Care Act would also offer state attorneys general and the U.S. Justice Department more tools to go after health care executives accused of corporate exploitation for endangering patient safety and access to health care, according to a press release.

### **CMS recalculates Medicare Advantage star ratings**

*Becker's Payer Issues; by Rylee Wilson; 6/13/24*

CMS has recalculated Medicare Advantage plans' star ratings after insurers challenging the agency's methodology were handed court victories. In a [memo](#) sent to MA plans on June 13, the agency said it would recalculate plans' star ratings for 2024 without eliminating extreme outliers.



## Research News

### **More COVID-19 patients died in understaffed hospitals, new data shows**

*University of Minnesota; by Stephanie Soucheray, MA; 6/13/24*

A new study in the International Journal of Nursing Studies suggests chronically understaffed US hospitals had higher rates of COVID-19 patient deaths early in the pandemic. "Our study found that individuals' likelihood of surviving was related to hospitals' investments in nursing services prior to the pandemic—in terms of hiring sufficient numbers of RNs, employing nurses with bachelor's educational preparation, and sustaining favorable work environments," said Karen Lasater, PhD, RN, the lead author of the study, in a press release from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. The study was based on outcomes seen among 87,000 Medicare enrollees (ages 65 to 99) hospitalized with COVID-19 from April through December 2020 in 237 general acute-care hospitals in New York and Illinois. ... Overall, the average age of patients was 78 years, and 31.5 % died within 30 days of admission, with 23% of those patients dying during the hospitalization.



## Post-Acute Care News

### **Home health agency racked up \$8.5 million through fraudulent claims, hired employees with criminal history**

*Home Health Care News; by Andrew Donlan; 6/13/24*

The former owner of a home-based care company – based in the Cincinnati area – has been found guilty of fraudulently billing more than \$8.5 million from Medicare, Medicaid and Veterans Affairs (VA) over a six-year period. From 2015 to 2021, Sharon Romaine Ward submitted at least 92,770 claims on behalf of Halo Home Healthcare to Medicaid, and received \$8.4 million between 2016 and

2021. She also admitted that she concealed her ownership of that company because of a prior felony conviction.

## General News

### **How funerals and death became the new hot things**

*New York Post; by Alix Strauss; 6/16/24*

... Funeral homes, similar to cemeteries ... are becoming the new community centers, and people are attending events not for sad occasions, but because they have become death curious, death fascinated, and death comfortable as we all move closer to that final chapter. "The stigma around funeral homes is dissipating. The vibe of our funeral home is changing. People come to these events *wanting* to be here, as opposed to *having* to be here," said William Villanova, president of Frank E. Campbell – The Funeral Chapel. "There's a void we are filling in our community. We put on large-scale, high-quality, catered events with talented people at an extraordinary space."

## Education

### **Staff training key to improving hospice quality among LGBTQ+ patients**

*Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 6/13/24*

Hospice staff training models with culturally appropriate LGBTQ+ components are key to improving quality outcomes among an increasingly diverse base of underserved seniors. Ongoing staff education and communication skill building are two significant pieces of bridging gaps of hospice care among LGBTQ+ seniors, according to Jerry Farmer, vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion at AccentCare.



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# Today's Encouragement

**Juneteenth 2024: If people can be taught to hate, they can be taught to love. But we need to know, you can't erase history. So, let's learn from it and be sure it doesn't happen again. — Ms. Opal Lee, Civil Rights Activist, Grandmother of Juneteenth and honorary national co-chair of the Juneteenth Legacy Project**

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