

Cordt Kassner

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**HOSPICE &
PALLIATIVE CARE
TODAY**

June 27th, 2024

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Headlines

Delaware legislature passes Medical-Aid-in-Dying law

CBS WBOC, DOver, DE; by Sean Curtis; 6/25/24

The Delaware State Senate is sending House Bill 140, or the End-of-Life Options Law, to Governor John Carney's desk after passing it Tuesday [6/25/24]. ... Medical aid in dying would only be available to adult Delawareans diagnosed with an incurable disease or illness who have been given a prognosis of six months or less to live. The prognosis must come from at least two medical professionals, according to lawmakers. Advanced age, disability, mental illness, or chronic health conditions would not qualify a person, under the law. Those seeking medical aid in dying under HB 140 would need to demonstrate an ability to understand and grasp the consequences of their decision, as determined by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist. ... It will now head to the Governor's Office for Carney's signature before becoming law, unless Carney chooses to veto the legislation.

'We may not ever be fully staffed': Health system C-suites plan for the future

Becker's Hospital Review - Leadership & Management; by Laura Dyrda; 6/24/24

After the pandemic, most healthcare leaders experienced a "great resignation" as workers left for other service industries and ever since health systems have been dealing with a lack of skilled labor to backfill the vacancies. "As we have realized we may not ever be fully staffed to the degree we were pre-COVID, we now must augment our existing workforce with technology that extends their capabilities," said Mark Moseley, MD, president of USF Tampa General Physicians and executive vice president of Tampa General Hospital. "This is a two-part challenge. First, we need to deploy technology thoughtfully with sound blocking and tackling, which is expensive in both time and capital. Second, we must train our workforce to use these new technologies to aid them in their daily responsibilities in a manner that does not diminish the ethos of why many of us

went into healthcare: the interactions with patients and members of the healthcare team." Physicians and nurses can fall on a wide spectrum of excitement or distaste for incorporating technology into their practice. Some may find it impersonal and challenging to understand while others see it as a tool boosting their capacity. ... [Click on the title's link to continue reading.]

Hospice Provider News

Big Bend Hospice names leaders to head Seven Oaks Health

Business Wire, Tallahassee, Florida; 6/25/24

Big Bend Hospice, a leading provider of end-of-life care in Florida's Big Bend region, announced key leadership promotions today to head its new parent company, Seven Oaks Health. The promotions position Seven Oaks Health for continued growth in fulfilling its mission of reimagining healthcare for those facing chronic, serious, or terminal illness, with a focus on empowering patients to live healthier lives wherever they call home.

- Jon Wood Promoted to President and Chief Strategy Officer ...
- Dr. Deborah Morris Named Chief Medical Officer of Seven Oaks Health ...



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Royal Marines musicians play for dying bandmate

Verified News Explorer Network, from the United Kingdom; 6/25/24

Musicians from the Royal Marines laid on a poignant performance at a hospice for their dying bandmate. Newlywed Sophie Ward, 27, was joined by her husband Richard, patients, staff and volunteers for the emotional final performance. Sophie was moved in her bed on to the patio adjoining her room to listen and watch her beloved band for one last time, accompanied by her husband - a fellow Royal Marines musician. Sophie, who suffers from Motor Neurone Disease, has been an inpatient at the hospice in Winsley near Bradford-upon-Avon, Wiltshire, since mid-June. Sophie was moved in her bed on to the

patio adjoining her room to listen to her beloved band. ... Her colleagues, dressed in the uniform, marched and performed songs chosen by Sophie.

Nancy Streber Memorial Golf Classic continues record-breaking fundraising for McLaren Hospice

The County Press, Davison, MI; 6/26/24

The 76th Annual Nancy Streber Memorial Golf Classic held May 11 at Heather Hills Golf Course near Romeo, raised more than \$15,000 for McLaren Hospice's end-of-life care services — breaking its fundraising record previously reached in 2023. The event, founded by Dave Streber and his family, honors the memory of his mother, Nancy, and the care her father received as a McLaren patient. In addition to the fundraising milestone, the event hosted 140, making it one of the largest, most successful events in the memorial outing's history. "We are profoundly grateful for the 27 years of dedication from Dave Streber and his family, as well as the numerous organizations and all of individuals who have contributed to this event and supported McLaren Hospice over the years," said Cindy Tomlinson, MSN, RN, vice president of hospice at McLaren Health Management Group.

Palliative Care Provider News

Garnet Health shuts palliative care program

Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 6/25/24

New York state-based Garnet Health has announced a restructuring plan that spells the demise of its inpatient palliative care services. The plan includes layoffs of about 1% of the health system's workforce, numbering 26 employees. This is estimated to save Garnett \$4.6 million in salaries and benefits. "[Garnet] continues to be challenged with significant labor expenses, inflation on supplies and equipment, and low payor reimbursement rates," the health system indicated in a statement. The restructuring is the result of financial headwinds, including decreased demand. Patient volumes are gradually increasing, but not yet to pre-pandemic levels, the company stated in an announcement.

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Clinical News

Palliative care physician: 'Healing is possible' even when cure is not

Healio, Chicago, IL; by Jennifer Byrne; 6/26/24

During her fellowship as a palliative care physician, Sunita Puri, MD, met a patient who taught her that healing is possible even when cure is not. Alice, a 35-year-old woman, had acute myeloid leukemia. ... Nobody wanted to say it out loud, but Alice was dying. "She was only a couple years older than me. She'd lived in San Francisco, a few streets away from where I lived in my residency," Puri, program director of the hospice and palliative medicine fellowship program at UMass Chan School of Medicine. ... "She had a vibrancy that I had always hoped to embody, but she was intubated, wide awake, on dialysis and starting to suffer from ascending paralysis." ... During rounds one day, Puri told her attending that she was at a loss about how to help Alice and didn't feel she was doing anything meaningful for her. "My attending said, 'What if just being at her bedside is achieving something meaningful?'" Puri recalled. "I'd always understood healing and cure to be different, but this was when I really felt it." ... "What if healing is choosing to understand that there's going to be suffering that we can't alleviate — and sometimes that's our own — but the most important thing to bring to that is presence?" she said. [Click on the article's title to continue reading.]

Editor's Note: Though not directly related to this article, read "Today's Encouragement" at the end of today's newsletter.

Advanced lung cancer: Studies explore palliative care delivered by telehealth and in a stepped-care approach

The ASCO Post - American Society of Clinical Oncology; by Alice Goodman; 6/25/24 Early palliative care can be integrated into the course of treatment for patients with advanced lung cancer via delivery by telehealth with outcomes similar to when palliative care is delivered via in-person visits, according to results of the REACH PC trial presented by Joseph Greer, PhD, of Harvard Medical School, Boston, at the 2024 ASCO Annual Meeting Plenary Session. A separate randomized noninferiority study presented at the ASCO meeting by Jennifer S. Temel, MD, FASCO, also of Harvard Medical School, Boston, found that stepped palliative care was noninferior to monthly visits with early integrated palliative care. Results of the stepped-care study were published in *JAMA* to coincide with the presentation at ASCO. [This article includes:]

- Benefits of Telehealth ...
- REACH PC Details ...
- Stepped Palliative Care ...
- Study Details ...
- Expert Point of View ...

Editor's Note: This article describes implications and practical uses of a research article we posted on June 8, and again in our Sunday "Most Read" articles on June 16, "Stepped palliative care for patients with advanced lung cancer: A randomized clinical trial."

Regulatory News

'Lot of work to be done': What home health leaders expect from payment rulemaking in 2024

Home Health Care News; by Joyce Famakinwa; 6/24/24

In recent years, home health care has faced relentless cuts from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). It has plagued the industry, but providers and advocates alike are still hopeful a light at the end of the tunnel is ahead. ... Home Health Care News recently caught up with PQHH CEO Joanne Cunningham and David Totaro, the president and executive director of Hearts for Home Care. ... [Cunningham said,] "I anticipate that what we will see, given CMS's posture and prior rulemaking cycles, is the continuation of the policy that will put in place permanent cuts to the Medicare home health program. We're bracing ourselves for an additional sizable permanent cut. We don't know exactly

what CMS has planned for the temporary cuts, otherwise known as the clawback cuts. We will certainly see, at a minimum, CMS identify what their new projected value of the temporary cuts are. ...



Mergers & Acquisition News

Risant Health plans to acquire North Carolina system

Becker's Hospital Review; by Alan Condon; 6/24/24

Risant Health, a nonprofit **formed** under Oakland, Calif.-based Kaiser Permanente, has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Greensboro, N.C.-based Cone Health. The news comes less than three months after Risant acquired its first health system, Danville, Pa.-based Geisinger Health. If the transaction closes, Cone Health will operate independently as a regional and community-based health system under Risant, which supports organizations with technology and services to improve outcomes and lower care costs in diverse business models.

UAB Health to acquire Ascension St. Vincent's

Becker's Hospital Review; by Laura Dyrda; 6/25/24

The University of Alabama System's board of trustees unanimously approved an agreement to acquire Ascension St. Vincent's Health System. Birmingham-based

UAB will assume ownership of all Ascension St. Vincent's care sites under the agreement, announced June 25. The transaction still needs approval from federal regulators and the Catholic Church. UAB and Ascension expect the deal to close in the fall of 2024. "Patients will continue to have access to the healthcare services and providers they've come to trust and ultimately gain access to a larger care network," said Dawn Bulgarella, CEO of UAB Health System, in a news release. The two organizations have worked closely together in the past, launching UAB/Ascension St. Vincent's Alliance in 2020 to improve access to care. ... UAB Health, a \$6.4 billion system, aims to strengthen hospitals in the state, especially as financial hardship has caused other hospitals nationwide to close.

Post-Acute Care News

20 most socially responsible hospitals, per Lown Institute

Becker's Hospital Review; by Mackenzie Bean; 6/25/24

Duke Regional Hospital in Durham, N.C., is the most socially responsible acute care hospital in the U.S., according to a June 25 [ranking](#) from Lown Institute. The nonpartisan healthcare think tank assessed more than 2,700 acute care hospitals and 800 critical access hospitals nationwide across 54 metrics related to health equity, value of care and patient outcomes. ... The 20 most socially responsible acute care hospitals in the U.S., per Lown Institute:

1. Duke Regional Hospital (Durham, N.C.)
2. Baylor Scott & White Medical Center–Pflugerville (Texas)
3. UCHHealth Greeley (Colo.) Hospital
4. Adventist Health Ukiah Valley (Ukiah, Calif.)
5. UNM Sandoval Regional Medical Center (Rio Rancho, N.M.)
6. Suburban Community Hospital (Norristown, Pa.)
7. Cedar City (Utah) Hospital
8. Methodist Medical Center (Oak Ridge, Tenn.)
9. St. Luke's Hospital–Upper Bucks Campus (Quakertown, Pa.)
10. Sonoma (Calif.) Valley Health Care District
11. [Click on the title's link for the remaining top 20, and for a link to their full list.]



General News

Summer COVID wave emerges: 5 notes

Becker's Clinical Leadership; by Paige Twenter; 6/24/24

As "FLiRT" coronavirus variants [account](#) for about 77% of infections, COVID-19 cases are ticking upward this summer, according to CDC data. Here are five things to know from the CDC's June 21 update:

1. Test positivity increased from 5.4% to 6.6% in one week. ...
2. The CDC estimates that "COVID-19 infections are growing or likely growing in 39 states and territories, declining or likely declining in 0 states or territories, and are stable or uncertain in 10 states and territories."
3. The "FLiRT" variants are a group of strains that all start with the letters "KP" or "JN," and they have been steadily rising in dominance. ...
4. On June 13, the FDA instructed vaccine manufacturers to use the KP.2 strain for 2024-2025 COVID-19 shot formulations. KP.2 currently makes up 20.8% of infections.
5. ... Overall hospitalization and death rates remain low, but since June 1, hospitalizations are up 25% and deaths have increased 16.7%.

Education

Project ECHO: 5 years of fostering learning in your community

Dartmouth Health; by Connections Magazine and modified for the web; 6/25/24

Teach, teach, learn, learn. That is the model [Project ECHO®](#) at [Dartmouth Health](#) uses to connect people and their communities in a virtual setting, sharing knowledge between participants and subject matter experts. The program is especially helpful for rural communities seeking expertise on a broad range of

health and medical issues. ... ECHO is an acronym for Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes. ... The past three cohorts of the Palliative Care ECHO have been very successful, and the program content has continued to evolve over time. The sessions have had an average of 70 participants and have received high scores on feedback metrics. Fifty percent of participants were repeat attendees. "Our mission is to improve palliative care throughout our region, and our leadership is committed to the model," Kathleen Broglio, DNP says. "This was the culmination of what I hoped to do in my career."

Editor's Note: Memorable quote from this article, "'Everyone is a teacher, and everyone is a learner,'" says Kathleen Broglio, DNP, associate professor of medicine and a nurse practitioner of palliative medicine. Broglio has co-led the Palliative Care ECHO with Robin Larson, MD, MPH through three courses (cohorts) and with the support of the Project ECHO team at Dartmouth Health.

Today's Encouragement

Sometimes, it's enough to just be there for someone in need. A quiet presence speaks volumes. A friend who volunteers for Hospice said, "Don't just do something, sit there." - Julie Smith, in her "Dear grads ..." Commencement Speech

Editor's Note: Though not directly related to this quote, read the article above in our newsletter, "Palliative care physician: 'Healing is possible' even when cure is not."



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