

## Cordt Kassner

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PALLIATIVE CARE  
TODAY**

## August 12th, 2024

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## Headlines

### **COVID-19 falls to No. 10 cause of death in US**

*AP; 8/9/24*

U.S. death rates fell last year for all age groups compared with 2022, federal health officials said Thursday. Here's what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data showed:

- COVID-19 fell to the 10th leading cause of death. Early in the pandemic, the coronavirus was the nation's third leading cause of death. It dropped to fourth in 2022.
- The leading causes of death were heart disease, cancer and a category of injuries that includes gun deaths and drug overdoses.
- There were nearly 3.1 million deaths last year in the U.S., down from 3.3 million in 2022.
- Death rates by race and ethnicity were down for all groups, though disparities remain.

## Hospice Provider News

## **Hospices face 'hard roads' in budgeting for sustainable growth**

*Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 8/9/24*

Hospice budgeting practices hinge on several factors, according to Matt Chadwick, CFO of Well Care Health. Building a sustainable financial structure for end-of-life care delivery can be a challenging feat when navigating the impacts of patient care and staffing needs, referral streams, operational expenses, billing claim cycles and compliance factors, Chadwick said... Quality and compliance are also important pieces of a hospices' budget and growth potential as providers experience. Case in point, hospices that fail to comply with new quality reporting requirements set forth in the 2025 payment rule face a 4% penalty... "The budget should not just be solely 100% of the financial person's responsibility," Rachael Feedback, revenue cycle senior product manager of home and hospice at MatrixCare by ResMed, said. "It should be a conversation with the clinical side, the operational side, so that you're understanding your different measurements for hospice and how that translates to the budget and not solely focused on the pure dollars behind it."

## **Butte hospice workers help patients focus on living**

*KBZK7 (Bozeman, MT); by Meagan Thompson; 8/7/24*

Hospice care is generally seen as a last resort for the end of life but for Bonnie Dwyer and her husband John, the hospice care she has been receiving has provided reassurance and even joy... Leighann McCauley, the director of nursing at Honeybee Hospice was on call the weekend Bonnie's condition became severe. Thanks to some quick thinking and creativity, McCauley and her team addressed the wound and her continuing care with the Honeybee staff has made a difference in her life.

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## **Hospice chaplain accused of sexually assaulting woman at Sacramento County care facility**

*KCRA (Sacramento, CA); by Lindsay Weber; 8/8/24*

A Placer County man was arrested on Thursday, accused of sexually assaulting a woman in a care facility he worked for as a hospice chaplain, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office said. The sheriff's office said Arthur Apgar was arrested for four counts of sexual battery against a person who is seriously disabled or medically incapacitated. Apgar worked for a private company that contracts with hospice facilities, officials said. The assault happened within the past week and was captured on surveillance video.

## **Palliative Care Provider News**

### **Palliative care is important in managing cardiovascular disease**

*NJToday; 8/8/24*

Implementing patient-centered palliative care therapies, including prescribing, adjusting or discontinuing medications as needed, may help control symptoms and improve quality of life for people with heart disease, according to "[Palliative Pharmacotherapy for Cardiovascular Disease](#)," a new scientific statement from the American Heart Association, published in the journal, *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*.

## **Regulatory News**

## Value-Based Insurance Design Model: Hospice Benefit Component

CMS email; 8/9/24

Calendar Year (CY) 2024 Technical and Operational Guidance on the Conclusion of the Hospice Benefit Component. The guidance covers CMS's requirements and expectations for the remainder of the Hospice Benefit Component's operations through Calendar Year (CY) 2024 along with requirements and expectations for operations on and after January 1, 2025. This document covers the following topics:

- Financial Responsibility for Care Provided During and Immediately After a Hospice Election
- Network Adequacy Requirements
- MAO Communication to Enrollees and Providers
- Transitional Concurrent Care
- Hospice Supplemental Benefits
- Palliative Care
- Operations and Claims
- Monitoring and Data Collection



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## Post-Acute Care News

### Home Instead Totton launches expedited home care service to meet growing needs

*KMLK (AR) press release; 8/7/24*

Home Instead Totton has announced the launch of its new expedited home care service... This new service aims to cut down waiting times, helping clients get the care and support they need quickly and efficiently. The service is designed to meet various needs of the local community, offering a wide range of home care

options. These include home visits, specialised care, health care, and live-in care. Each service is designed to address specific client needs, from daily activities to complex health conditions.

*Publisher's note: Is there need / opportunity for "expedited" hospice care?*

## **Violent dementia patients leave nursing home staffers and residents 'scared to death'**

*KFF Health News; by Jordan Rau; 8/9/24*

Violent altercations between residents in long-term care facilities are alarmingly common. Across the country, residents in nursing homes or assisted living centers have been killed by other residents who weaponized a bedrail, shoved pillow stuffing into a person's mouth, or removed an oxygen mask. A recent [study](#) in JAMA Network Open of 14 New York assisted living homes found that, within one month, 15% of residents experienced verbal, physical, or sexual resident-on-resident aggression. Another [study](#) found nearly 8% of assisted living residents engaged in physical aggression or abuse toward residents or staff members within one month. Dementia residents are especially likely to be involved in altercations because the disease damages the parts of the brain affecting memory, language, reasoning, and social behavior.

## **Why more than 30% of rural hospitals are at risk of closure**

*MedCityNews; by Katie Adams; 8/8/24*

More than 700 hospitals across the rural U.S. are at risk of closing due to their financial woes — and for more than half of these hospitals, the risk of closure is immediate, according to a new report. The report argued this is due largely to inadequate reimbursement from health plans. More than 700 hospitals across the rural U.S. are at risk of closing due to their financial instability — that's over 30% of the country's rural hospitals. And for more than half of these 700 hospitals, the risk of closure is immediate, according to a new [report](#) from the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform (CHQPR).

*Publisher's note: The CHQPR report linked above is very interesting, including a table listing states with the most hospitals at immediate risk of closing - the top 5 states are Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Alabama.*



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## **New England hospital CEOs warn lawmakers of crisis in rural health care system**

*Mainebiz; by Laurie Schreiber; 8/8/24*

MaineHealth's CEO was one of three in the Northeast who recently told federal lawmakers that rural health care systems are in crisis. "As a family physician by training, it has been difficult to watch our rural communities struggle to maintain access to high-quality care for their residents," said Dr. Andrew Mueller. "Our proposals align with, and support, our MaineHealth vision of 'working together so our communities are the healthiest in America.'"

## **Technology / Innovations News**

### **Rescue from above: How drones may narrow emergency response times**

*KFF Health News; by Michelle Andrews; 7/22/24*

Starting in September, if someone in Clemmons, North Carolina, calls 911 to report a cardiac arrest, the first responder on the scene may be a drone carrying an automated external defibrillator, or AED. "The idea is for the drone to get there several minutes before first responders," such as an emergency medical technician or an ambulance, said Daniel Crews, a spokesperson for the sheriff's office in Forsyth County, where Clemmons is located. The sheriff's office is partnering on the project with local emergency services, the Clinical Research Institute at Duke University, and the drone consulting firm Hovecon. "The ultimate goal is to save lives and improve life expectancy for someone experiencing a cardiac episode," Crews said.

*Publisher's note: As with all things tech, when and how might drones be used in hospice?*

## **General News**



## **Fearless hospice patient takes joyride**

*West Valley View (AZ); by Lin Sue Flood; 8/7/24*

Don Tamuty, a beloved former Madison Unified School District teacher, had one thing left on his bucket list. The 95-year-old shared with his hospice nurse, Monisha Roe, that he would love to ride in a driverless car. Monisha and the rest of Don's Hospice of the Valley care team knew exactly how to fulfill that wish! They booked a driverless cruise on Waymo One to take Don out to a nice restaurant.



## **The top priorities for healthcare CEOs**

*Modern Healthcare; 8/9/24*

What's the top priority in the second half? What's the biggest challenge? ...

Modern Healthcare reporters posed those two questions to CEOs in all corners of the industry to see where healthcare is headed in the coming months.

*[Selected responses from 13 CEOs include:]*

- We're growing state-by-state, which means doing the right things to invest and grow in those states while being really, really thoughtful about capital efficiency and the bottom line... The biggest challenge is the change in the insurance landscape around obesity. Brooke Boyarsky Pratt, founder and CEO, Knownwell
- We're implementing behavioral health services in our emergency department via telehealth. We are also going to be providing leadership training for all of our middle managers.. Staffing is the biggest challenge. Also, maintaining a positive operating margin is becoming a problem. Martin Fattig, CEO, Nemaha County Hospital
- We are fighting to expand the collective bargaining rights of nurses and other clinicians who work in the Veterans Health Administration... Nancy Hagans, president, National Nurses United
- A continuation of quality service delivery is our first priority. John Kao, founder and CEO, Alignment Health



## Beyond a project management office: Why transformation offices are the future

*Human Resource Executive; by Riley Smith, Maura Koehler-Hanlon; 8/6/24*

Very few transformations deliver on their goals. Over the past decade, project management offices (PMOs) and change management offices (CMOs) have been able to reduce the percentage of transformations that fail from 38% in 2013 to 13% in 2023, according to research by Bain. What a transformation office does:

1. Strategy development
2. Governance
3. Program management
4. Change management
5. Performance tracking

## Today's Encouragement

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