

## Cordt Kassner

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## August 15th, 2024

### Contents

#### Hospice Provider News

- [1. NAHC President Dombi: There's 'good and bad' to payers entering home health care](#)
- [2. Hospices leverage community resources to serve vulnerable homeless populations](#)
- [3. 'The Last Ecstatic Days' one day screening strives to teach the world how to die without fear](#)
- [4. Want to keep talent? Develop your leaders](#)

#### Clinical News

5. Death is inevitable. It's time we learned to talk about it.
6. Examining the relationship between rural and urban clinicians' familiarity with patients and families and their comfort with palliative and end-of-life care communication
7. Virtual palliative care improves quality of life in advanced lung cancer
8. 3 components of virtual nursing
9. Thrive Alliance donates robotic pets to our hospice dementia patients

### **Regulatory News**

10. Cost report prompts tweaks to ACO REACH model
11. Perfecting healthcare's 360° consumer-centric strategy
12. The tangled web of pediatric palliative care payment and policy

### **Post-Acute Care News**

13. Blue Ridge Hospice moves forward with new PACE Program

### **International News**

14. Inside one hospice's battle for survival as it faces 'incoming tsunami' of need

### **Today's Encouragement**

15. Today's Encouragement: Back to school ...

## **Hospice Provider News**

### **NAHC President Dombi: There's 'good and bad' to payers entering home health care**

*Home Health Care News; by Joyce Famakinwa; 8/13/24*

Before retiring at the end of year, National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) President William A. Dombi still has items to check off his to-do list. On the top of this list is the previously announced NAHC and National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) merger. ... Ultimately, Dombi has seen home-based care evolve when he reflects back on his tenure at NAHC. ... [Dombi] sees the evolution of home-based care through large payers, such as Humana Inc. and UnitedHealth Group, investing in the space. "I think you can certainly look at it from a positive perspective, saying, these plans had options to invest in X, Y and Z in health care, and they chose home care and physicians," he said. "Their forecast says it's about community-based health care services." However, he noted the downsides of payers investing heavily in the space, too. ...

### **Hospices leverage community resources to serve vulnerable homeless populations**

*Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 8/13/24*

Hospices are increasingly collaborating with community organizations to better address the end-of-life needs of the homeless population. Isolated homeless senior populations are reaching concerning levels nationwide. Many medical and nonmedical issues can be exacerbated at the end of life among unhoused and homeless seniors compared to others, according to James Patrick Hall, executive director of Rocky Mountain Refuge. The Denver-based nonprofit organization offers shelter for people with end-of-life care needs. ... Home less populations have increased across the country in recent years, with seniors among those reaching "record-high" volumes and outpacing other demographic groups, Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies research recently [reported](#). *Editor's Note: For data specific to your state, click here for [The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's "The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report \(AHAR\) to Congress."](#)*

### **'The Last Ecstatic Days' one day screening strives to teach the world how to die without fear**

*Bangor Daily News, Bangor, ME; by BDN Community; 8/13/24*

Hospice Volunteers of Waldo County invites Greater Waldo County to a single night screening on Tuesday, Aug. 20 at 7 p.m. Post-screening, there will be a Community Conversation with Hospice and Palliative Care Physician Aditi Sethi, MD and Director of the Center for Conscious Living & Dying/Hospice Volunteers of Waldo County's Flic Shooter. Sethi, MD's end-of-life palliative work is featured in the film. "The Last Ecstatic Days" focuses on a young man with terminal brain cancer (Ethan Sisser) as he sits alone in his hospital room. When Sisser starts live-streaming his death journey on social media, thousands of people around the world join to celebrate his courage. Still, he envisions more-to teach the world how to die without fear. To do that, Sisser needs to film his actual death. What unfolds next is a rarely-glimpsed perspective of how a community of strangers helps a young man die with grace.

*Editor's Note: This movie has been featured on PBS. The Boston Globe describes, "... courageous end-of-life chronicle, which overflows with compassion." The Louisiana Mississippi Hospice & Palliative Care Organization shared this as a viewing and discussion at their July 2024 conference. [For the trailer and more information, click here.](#)*

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## Want to keep talent? Develop your leaders

*Forbes; by Robert Matuson; 8/12/24*

You're investing heavily in recruitment, yet your top talent might be slipping away. Why? Because 7 in 10 U.S. workers are ready to leave if they have a bad manager. Younger employees are leading this charge, as highlighted in LinkedIn's latest Workforce Confidence [survey](#). With gig work on the rise and many young professionals living at home, they have the freedom to choose jobs that value them. The solution? Transform your managers into leaders worth following. ... 5 Ways to Develop Your Managers into Strong People Leaders:

1. Meet your leaders where they are. ...
2. Engage a coach to work side-by-side with your leaders. ...
3. Create an in-house leadership book club. ...
4. Develop a leadership speaker series. ...
5. Create a leadership growth circle. ...

*Editor's Note: Teleios Collaborative Network's (TCN) next 5-day Leadership Immersion Course will be November 4-8, 2024. [Click here for information](#). TCN is a [sponsor for our newsletter](#), and provides the monthly podcast--hosted by Chris Comeaux--for the monthly hospice leadership podcast, "Top Stories of the Month." [Click here for July 2024](#).*

## Clinical News

## **Death is inevitable. It's time we learned to talk about it.**

*MedPageToday; by Nidhi Bhaskar; 8/13/24*

By fostering honest and compassionate discussions, we can provide patients with more dignity. Years ago, in a busy emergency department, I found myself joining my mentor at the bedside of an elderly man experiencing chest pain. After completing the physical exam, the doctor unceremoniously changed gears to abruptly ask our patient, "If your heart were to stop beating, do you want us to do *everything*?" Between the stress of the situation and the vague and awkward delivery of the question, our patient seemed (understandably) overwhelmed. So was I. ... End-of-life conversations can feel like a "word soup" of sorts ... it is easy for patients and providers alike to feel lost. ... Providers must also consider the nuances of cultural attitudes towards death; the location and family arrangements surrounding a person at the end of life; and the varying emotional responses and feelings of decision paralysis surrounding how one dies and how one feels about dying.

*Editor's Note: For a related article in our newsletter today, read ["Examining the relationship between rural and urban clinicians' familiarity with patients and families and their comfort with palliative and end-of-life care communication."](#)*

## **Examining the relationship between rural and urban clinicians' familiarity with patients and families and their comfort with palliative and end-of-life care communication**

*American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine; by Brandi Pravecek, DNP, CNP, FNP-BC, Howard Wey, PhD, and Mary J. Isaacson, PhD, RN, RHNC, CHPN®, FPCN; 7/23/24*

Effective healthcare clinician communication is a key component of quality palliative and end-of-life (PEOL) care. However, communication may be hampered when clinicians are not comfortable initiating these conversations with patients and their families. Clinicians working in rural areas report several barriers to providing palliative care. This study examined the relationship between rural and urban clinicians' reported familiarity with their patients and families end-of-life, their reported comfort in initiating PEOL conversations, and their PEOL care knowledge.

*Editor's Note: For rural executive leaders, do you ensure opportunities to train and support your community's local clinicians about hospice and palliative care communication? Familiarity is important. And, it must be paired with masterful*

communication skills about dying, death and grief. Read today's post, "[Death is inevitable. It's time we learned to talk about it.](#)"



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### **Virtual palliative care improves quality of life in advanced lung cancer**

*MedPage Today; by Greg Laub; 8/13/24*

In this exclusive *MedPageToday* video, Roy Herbst, MD, PhD, of Yale Cancer Center in New Haven, Connecticut, discusses a study opens in a new tab or window presented at the recent American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) meeting, which showed that patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer receiving palliative care via video consultation had outcomes comparable to those treated in person. Following is a transcript of his remarks: ... "Access is the biggest issue we have in cancer in all of medicine these days."

### **3 components of virtual nursing**

*MarketScale, Dallas, TX; by David Jastrow; 8/12/24*

As healthcare adopts digital innovations, virtual nursing is increasingly significant. This study delves into the key components driving this transition, analyzing the benefits, and exploring future trends. [The 3 key components identified include:]

- Hardware ...
- Software ...
- Staffing: "Vitality, bridging the gap between bedside and virtual nursing requires change management skills, fostering collaborative practices to enrich patient care."

... Striking a balance between adopting new technologies and maintaining reliable patient care is a significant challenge. Thus, alternative solutions must consider both technical advancement and healthcare staff adaptability.

### **Thrive Alliance donates robotic pets to Our Hospice dementia patients**

*Local News Digital, Columbus, IN; by LND Staff; 8/13/24*

Our Hospice of South Central Indiana has announced that it has received a generous donation from Thrive Alliance that will significantly improve the quality of life for dementia patients. The donation includes several lifelike robotic animals designed to provide sensory-based stimulation and comfort to patients experiencing dementia. The innovative pets calm patients, encouraging them to smile, hug, and stroke the robotic animal's fur. ... President of Our Hospice Steph Cain said, "These robotic animals will make the transition from home to our care center much smoother. They not only provide comfort but also act as a catalyst for social connection, sparking positive interactions with staff, visitors, and fellow patients."



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## **Regulatory News**

### **Cost report prompts tweaks to ACO REACH model**

*Modern Healthcare; by Bridget Early; 8/12/24*

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is making changes to its largest accountable care organization experiment to ensure it's actually saving money. In a notice published on its website Aug. 1, CMS outlines a slew of planned updates to the ACO Realizing Equity, Access and Community Health, or ACO REACH, model in 2025. Notably, the agency is changing how it establishes benchmarks for "high-needs population" ACOs to guard against overspending while addressing the so-called "ratcheting effect," under which ACOs that contain spending face higher hurdles to earning shared savings in future years because of their past successes. *[Access limited due to paywall.]*



*Editor's Note: [Click here for the CMS ACO REACH Model Performance Year 2025 Model Update - Quick Reference.](#)*

## **Perfecting healthcare's 360° consumer-centric strategy**

*Guidehouse; 8/13/24*

To ably compete in today's healthcare environment while meeting their mission of quality patient care, health systems must make patient access and the consumer experience a core value across their entire organization. That means placing a relentless focus on reducing friction to meet customer expectations and aligning people and tech resources with standardization and scale. ...

*Editor's Note: What are your hospice's "consumer experience" scores? Using publicly reporting data from the CMS Hospice CAHPS scores, examine [\(1\) the CMS Hospice Compare Fact Sheet](#) (defines the hospice measures and data that are collected) and [\(2\) the National Hospice Locator](#) (sorted by quality scores high to low), by National Hospice Analytics (a sponsor for our newsletter).*

## **The tangled web of pediatric palliative care payment and policy**

*Hospice News; by Holly Vossel; 8/13/24*

A complex web of state regulations and reimbursement systems can challenge pediatric palliative care access for seriously ill children and their families. The nation's fragmented health care system lacks clear guidance when it comes to navigating chronic, complex conditions in children, adolescents and young adults, according to Jonathan Cottor, CEO and founder of the National Center for Pediatric Palliative Care Homes. Much of the current state palliative regulations and reimbursement pathways focus on adult patient populations, representing a significant barrier to improved quality and support in the pediatric realm, Cottor said.



## **Post-Acute Care News**

### **Blue Ridge Hospice moves forward with new PACE Program**

*Hospice News; by Jim Parker; 8/12/24*

Blue Ridge Hospice is launching its first Program of All-Inclusive Care for the



Elderly (PACE) program, which will begin accepting participants on Sept. 1. The program is branded as Blue Ridge Independence at Home, designed to offer seniors a “comprehensive” suite of services to address medical and nonmedical needs and help them stay in their homes, the organization indicated. The launch reflects a longstanding trend of hospices diversifying their services to include upstream care, an area in which PACE programs are gaining ground. “Our desire to get into the PACE program was driven by a need to make the continuum of care more smooth for the frail aging population, ...” Jason Parsons, CEO of Blue Ridge Hospice, told Hospice News.

*Editor's Note: Blue Ridge Hospice is in Winchester, VA.*

## International News

### **Inside one hospice's battle for survival as it faces 'incoming tsunami' of need**

*SwiftTeleca in South Boston, Virginia, with this article about Swindon, United Kingdom; by Shawn Butlere; 8/13/24*

Swindon's Prospect Hospice is facing a £1 million deficit this year. Hospices are receiving “woefully inadequate” funding to deal with an “incoming tsunami” of patients needing end-of-life care, a desperate sector leader has warned. ... Chief executive Jeremy Lune ... said: “Hospice funding is woefully inadequate at the moment – that is a fact. In the last 10 years, the amount that we receive from the NHS [United Kingdom's National Health Service] has not increased in real terms at all. “The cost of living crisis and so on mean that in real terms, it has decreased. And the need for hospice services is increasing. With an ageing population, people are living longer, they're living with more conditions, and the funding simply doesn't reflect that.”

*Editor's Note: USA hospice leaders, what themes and potential threats to our hospices are you seeing, especially in light of the new CMS Hospice Final Rule?*

## Today's Encouragement

For all experiencing back-to-school! ... You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. ~ Dr. Seuss, *Oh the Places You'll Go!*



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