

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Hospice News: Frequency Of Skilled Visits Vary At End Of Hospice, JAMA Study Says

#### Industry takes another popular press beating.

Day of the week, service setting, location, and ethnicity made a difference when it came to Medicare hospice patients receiving "professional" services at end of life, a new study shows.

Of the 661,557 Medicare hospice beneficiaries who died in federal fiscal year 2014, 81,478 (12.3 percent) received no professional staff visits in the last two days of life, according to the study published in the February issue of JAMA Internal Medicine. Researchers from **University of Washington**, **Abt Associates**, and **Brown University** identified "professional staff" as "physician, nursing staff, and social worker."

State variation ranged from 3.8 percent receiving no professional staff visits in Wisconsin to 19.7 percent in Alaska.

Black patients were less likely to have any visits than were white patients □ 15 percent vs. 12 percent, according to the study abstract. And those dying in a nursing home were 1.74 times less likely to have any visits than those dying at home □ 16.5 percent vs. 10.6 percent.

**Schedule influence:** Those dying on a Sunday were 3.35 times less likely to have a visit compared with persons dying on a Tuesday □ 20.3 percent vs. 7.4 percent.

The mainstream press picked up the study with headlines such as "Hospice patients get too little care in last days of life" (UPI) and "Many in Hospice Don't Get Medical Visit in Last 2 Days of Life" (HealthDay News in wide distribution).

See more about the study at <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2488922#>.