

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Hospice Services Help Surviving Spouses Long After Care Ends, Study Shows

The Medicare hospice benefit may be under fire, but there's no doubt it helps patients and their families. Researchers led by Professor **Katherine Ornstein** at the **Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai** in New York examined depression in surviving spouses, according to a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine. The study analyzed data from 1,016 deceased patients and their surviving spouses.

There's no getting around the emotional fallout of a loved one's death. "After bereavement, depression symptoms increased overall for surviving spouses regardless of hospice use," according to the study's abstract at <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2296014>. But researchers noted "a modest reduction in depressive symptoms was more likely among spouses of hospice users than among spouses of nonhospice users."

Benefits for surviving spouses include "a decrease in depressive symptoms after death relative to spouses of those who did not use hospice," Ornstein told Forbes. "These differences are even more substantial one year after death."