

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: More Patients Starting Hospice In Last 3 Days Of Life

Hospice enrollment among Medicare beneficiaries with cancer is up, but so is the number of days cancer patients spend in the ICU at the end of their lives. And so is the proportion of patients who start hospice in the last three days of life, "a time period often too short to provide patients the full benefit of hospice care," notes a **Dartmouth Atlas Project** brief released last month.

Stats: Patients admitted to an Intensive Care Unit during the last month of life increased from 23.7 percent in the 2003-to-2007 time period to 28.8 percent in 2010, the brief says. The percent entering hospice during the last three days of life increased, from 8.3 percent to 10.9 percent in that time frame.

Utilization varied greatly by region and facility, notes the brief at www.dartmouthatlas.org/downloads/reports/Cancer_brief_090413.pdf.