

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Studies & Surveys: Focus On These Cancer Patients To Facilitate Hospice Access

#### **New study points the way to underserved populations.**

If you don't see a lot of hospice patients who are under 65, male, and married, you're not alone.

One in six cancer patients enroll in hospice only during their last three days of life, note **University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine** researchers in a release about a new study. They looked at cancer patients to find characteristics of those who were admitted to hospice only in the last three days of life, according to a new study in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. "Patients who were admitted in the last 3 days of life were more likely to have a hematologic malignancy, were more likely to be male and married, and were younger (age < 65 years)," notes the study's abstract.

**Also:** "Patients with Medicaid or self-insurance were less likely to be admitted to hospice within 3 days of death," the study notes.

"Waiting until the final days of life to begin hospice can shortchange patients and their families □ skipping over many benefits of hospice care and limiting the opportunity to improve patients' quality of life during this stressful time," said study co-author and physician **David Casarett**, a professor of medicine and director of hospice and palliative care at Penn Medicine. "Our findings point to some reasons why patients may seek hospice care so late in the course of their illness, which we hope will enable us to improve transitions to hospice at a more beneficial point in their care."

The study examined electronic medical records of 64,264 patients in 12 varied-size hospices in 11 states. "It is essential to optimize transitions to hospice and make it easier for patients and their loved ones to access this care," said the study's lead author and physician **Nina O'Connor**, assistant professor of clinical medicine.

Note: Find out more about the study online at [http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News\\_Releases/2014/09/casarett/](http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News_Releases/2014/09/casarett/)