



End-of-Life Issues and Attitudes

Residents, family members, caregivers, and practitioners all have different attitudes and levels of knowledge about end-of-life decisions and care. Here are just a few facts and statistics about end-of-life matters.

75...

percent of Americans favor advance directives, although only 30–35% of them actually write them. *(AARP, 2003)*

92...

percent of cancer patients in one study had heard about advance directives primarily through the media. *(American Journal of Critical Care, 1999)*

5...

percent of 2,000 cancer patients said that they heard about advance directives from their physicians, although 63% said that they would have liked to receive this information from this source. *(American Journal of Critical Care, 1999)*

25...

percent of U.S. cancer doctors surveyed support the use of physician-assisted suicide for a terminally ill patient with unremitting pain, while 6.5% support euthanasia. *(Annals of Internal Medicine, 2000)*

10...

percent of U.S. cancer doctors surveyed reported that they had participated in physician-assisted suicides, and 3.7% had performed euthanasia. *(Annals of Internal Medicine, 2000)*

621,000...

patients were discharged from hospice care in a one-year period. Most of these were white, elderly, and lived in a private or semi-private residences while receiving hospice services. Most lived with a relative who was a primary caregiver. *(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003)*

7...

out of 10 patients in hospice receive help with one or more activity of daily living. *(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003)*

70...

percent or more hospice patients are incontinent. *(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003)*

Suggested Resources



The End of Life/Palliative Education Resource Center has a full list of end-of-life Web sites and Web-based resources on issues including advance directives, palliative care, pain management, practitioner and patient education, and other topics (www.eperc.mcw.edu/links_alpha.htm). Here is a sampling of some of the listed sites:

- **Aging with Dignity (Five Wishes)**
www.agingwithdignity.org
- **Alzheimer's Association**
www.alz.org
- **American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine**
www.aahpm.org
- **American Academy of Pain Management**
www.aapainmanage.org
- **American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives**
www.aacpi.wisc.edu
- **American Bar Association—Advance Directives Information**
www.abanet.org/aging/myths.html
- **American Pain Foundation**
www.painfoundation.org
- **American Pain Society**
www.ampainsoc.org
- **Center to Advance Palliative Care**
www.capc.org
- **Center to Improve Care of the Dying**
www.gwu.edu/~cicd
- **Curriculum Guidelines for Family Practice Residents—End of Life**
www.aafp.org/eduguide.xml
- **Death with Dignity National Center**
www.deathwithdignity.org
- **Dying Well**
www.dyingwell.org
- **EPEC: Education for Physicians on End-of-Life Care**
www.epec.net
- **Hospice Foundation of America**
www.hospicefoundation.org
- **International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care**
www.hospicecare.com
- **Kaiser Permanente Palliative Care Program Toolkit**
www.growthhouse.org/palliative
- **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization**
www.nhpc.org
- **Promoting Excellence in End-of-Life Care**
www.promotingexcellence.org
- **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**
www.rwjf.org