

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