HOSPICE CARE PERCEPTION STUDY

Physician and Consumer Perceptions and Misconceptions

November 2010

Commissioned by Crossroads Hospice
The key findings: Consumers agree with physicians on the quality of hospice and the amount of service that should be provided. But when it comes to the right time to discuss hospice, it’s an individual preference.

Among the top fallacies that the study revealed: many consumers and physicians believe that you need to open up your own wallet to get hospice care in America.

The Hospice Care Perception study, commissioned by Crossroads Hospice, is a comprehensive survey of adults and physicians across America. Respondents included 700 consumers age 35 and older and 300 physicians: 200 specialists and 100 primary care physicians. All respondents had some familiarity with hospice.

### For those who were involved in the care of a loved one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you rate the quality of the hospice care the patient received?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Based on your experience, how would you grade hospice care as a service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have personally known someone in hospice</th>
<th>Have not personally known someone in hospice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade of A (Excellent)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade of B</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade of C (Average)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade of D</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade of F (Failing)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Length of Service
Physicians and consumers agree that patients should be receiving hospice care for at least 90 days, with the majority of the general public (54%) and physicians (52%) identifying 6 months or longer as the appropriate length of time. But half of hospice patients today receive care for less than three weeks, according to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, Hospice Care in America Facts and Figures, 2010 Edition.

Initiating the Conversation
Though nearly everyone says they want more time in hospice, there are key differences between physicians and consumers when it comes to initiating the service. Sixty-two percent of doctors said that hospice in America is offered to patients too late. In contrast, 77 percent of the general public said it was offered at the right time. Interestingly, when asked about their own loved ones, one out of three consumers and physicians said they would like to start the hospice conversation at the time of diagnosis or the start of treatment. Yet only one out of five physicians actually starts the conversation then.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate length of time to be receiving hospice care.</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 month</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3 months</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 6 months</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;6 months</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospice care offered to patients...</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too late</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the right time</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too early</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Pays?
Most consumers (68%) and a surprising number of physicians (36%) were unaware of the Medicare hospice benefit. A significant number of physicians (21%) also said that private health insurance is required by law to pay for hospice care.

The fact is that Medicare takes the financial strain off most patients and their family caregivers by paying 100 percent of the cost of many hospice services. Included are doctor visits, skilled nursing care, medication, equipment and supplies, personal care aides, certain physical and occupational therapists, and chaplaincy services. It also continues for the family after the patient passes away. The patient’s family is cared for through support services, such as grief recovery programs and chaplaincy services. Patients and their families can choose any Medicare-recognized hospice they want and more than 90 percent of hospices in the U.S. are certified by Medicare.
**Quality of Hospice**
Quality of hospice in the U.S. is good to excellent says both physicians and consumers. Respondents were asked to rate the quality of care received by their loved ones: 64% of consumers and 61% of physicians said the care was excellent.

**Perceptions/Feelings Associated with Hospice**
In addition to who pays, the survey found another misconception: hospice is a support group for patients who have given up hope and are waiting to die. One third of consumers (36%) and nearly one third of physicians (31%) described that as the role of hospice. But hospice is not just about end-of-life counseling. Hospice care helps the terminally ill live the remainder of their lives with comfort and confidence. And when it comes to coverage, most patients qualify for the Medicare benefit for as long as they are certified as terminally ill by a doctor or hospice medical director.

The data for the survey was collected via Walker Research and Marketing using proprietary online survey software. The survey was fielded between August 31 and September 3, 2010.

*Porter Storey, MD, FAAHPM, executive vice president of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, said he hopes the survey results will encourage doctors to make sure their patients are aware of the benefits of this special type of medical care, and know that they are entitled to six months of Medicare coverage. “We’ve always known that patients start receiving hospice care late, missing out on months of symptom relief and the many other ways hospice care can improve quality of life for them and their families, but it’s good to see that patients and doctors do appreciate its value and want to talk about it.” he said.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you view the role of hospice care in a terminal patient’s care?</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A support group for patients who have given up hope and are waiting to die.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When you think of hospice care, what feelings come to mind? (chose four out of a list of 13) (Top Four Selections)</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peacefulness</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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