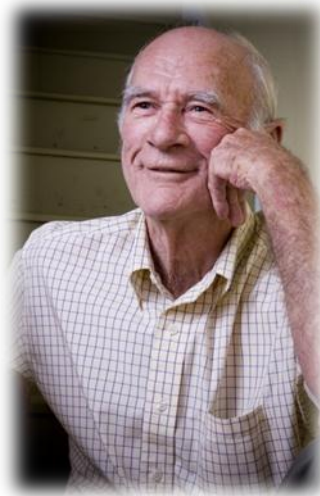


Journal of the American Geriatrics Society Hospice Improves Quality of Life for Patients with Dementia

This past August, the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* published a study examining the effects of hospice on the quality of life and quality of care received by patients dying of dementia (Teno J, Pedro L, Bozalo I, et al. Does hospice improve quality of care for persons dying from dementia? *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2011; 59 (8): 1531-6.). Dementia is a relatively recent addition to the list of recognized terminal diagnoses, and the diagnosis has been a subject of scrutiny during recent federal cost-cutting discussions. Joan Teno, MD and colleagues surveyed 538 bereaved family members across five states, in part to add evidence to these discussions.

There were 278 families where the patient received no hospice services, and 227 families with patients who had received hospice. Bereaved family members who receive hospice care “at the right time” report less unmet need, fewer concerns with quality of care, higher rating of the quality of care, and higher ratings of the quality of dying. For instance, families who receive hospice are 24% more likely to rate the quality of care as excellent (48.7% vs. 39.3%). Families who do not receive hospice prove 324% more likely to report unmet needs for dyspnea control (19.1% vs. 5.9%) and 180% more likely to report unmet needs

for information about what to expect (22.5% vs. 12.5%).



Researchers created a third group named “Too Late,” which consisted of 33 bereaved family members. This group consists of the family members of decedents who were transferred to an inpatient facility and admitted to hospice care within the last 24 hours of life. The Too Late group has the worst overall ratings owing to frustration with poor advance care planning.

This study adds to a body of evidence demonstrating how the hospice program meets its goals of improving the lives of patients with terminal illnesses. Baystate Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice (BVNAH) stands out as a good choice for life affirming care for the terminally ill. Where participants in Teno’s study rated care with hospice as excellent 48.7% of the time, BVNAH patients responding to recent PRC surveys rated our care as excellent 88.2% of the time, putting BVNAH above the 95th percentile for hospice agencies. In addition, BVNAH has a palliative care program which can begin palliative care before the prognosis is six months.



More than 20 Years of Hospice Experience to Support Patient Satisfaction

Baystate Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice (BVNAH) has been providing hospice care for more than 20 years. Our medical director is a geriatrician certified in Hospice & Palliative Care, and several of our hospice nurses and hospice aides have earned certification from the National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization. BVNAH hospice nurses also receive continual training on pain control. BVNAH’s experience helps support quality of life to the end.

Call BVNAH to help with important conversations about end-of-life care.
A hospice nurse or social worker will meet your patients at your office, at the hospital, or in their home.