

Missouri Office
1001 Craig Road, Suite 224
St. Louis, Missouri 63146
314.567-9292



Illinois Office
107 Southpointe Drive, Suite 2
Edwardsville, Illinois 62025
618.659-9292



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2007

Hospice Care and Planning

Few Minorities Use End-of-Life Hospice Care Industry increasingly reaching out to blacks, Hispanics

AP Associated Press

Updated: 3:57 p.m. CT July 15, 2007

Introductory Note: This month's newsletter reprints a recent Associated Press story relating to an interesting, if disappointing, demographic finding. We would be interested in feedback from those within the St. Louis area hospice community, particularly persons of color and any hospice that has engaged in or considered minority outreach programs. What has been your experience?

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - Unlike terminally ill patients who die in hospitals, attached to tubes and monitors, Marie Madison wants to die in the comfort of her home.

The 97-year-old woman, diagnosed with acute respiratory failure in January, is the first in her family to receive home hospice care, with nurses from New Beacon Hospice in Birmingham checking on her twice a week and on call 24 hours. She also is a black person who chose an end-of-life service that minorities have tended not to use as frequently as whites.

Blacks seek hospice care in disproportionately smaller numbers than whites partly because of cost, health insurance and cultural factors, including a sense of being denied medical care on the basis of race, according to health care specialists.

"Some people think that if a doctor wants them to stay home and not come into the hospital, that the medical system isn't truly concerned about them," said Jon Radulovic, vice president of communications for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Many in the hospice industry are reaching out to blacks and the growing Hispanic population, but Madison said no one had ever approached her about it until January.

"A social worker told me about it at the hospital and I thought it was nice," Madison said in a recent phone interview from her home.

Along with help from nurses, the hospice care team includes a chaplain who goes to Madison's home to sing her favorite hymns and read scriptures with her.

"So far so good," she said.

Reaching out to churches

In 2005, 82.2 percent of those receiving hospice care were white, while 7.5 percent identified themselves as black or African-American, according to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. About 75 percent of the country is

Announcing Our Inaugural Monthly "Lunch and Learn" Telephone Seminar!!

Advance Legal Planning to Protect Assets From Nursing Home Spend-Down: Who's a Candidate, and How Do We Plan?

This valuable and informative seminar will help you learn how to identify a good candidate for this type of planning, and introduce you to the special planning techniques we can utilize to help individuals and married couples best protect their assets from the financial devastation that can accompany an extended nursing home stay.

This is a FREE seminar, and better yet, you don't even need to leave your desk to attend!

***Date: Wednesday, September 19, 2007
Time: 12:00 Noon to 1:00 p.m.***

***To register, call us at 314-567-9292 in Missouri
or 618-659-9292 or 618-659-9292 in Illinois,
or e-mail beth@coulsonlawgroup.com.***

Call now, and mark your calendar!

Ask the Expert . . .

Hospice Patients Go To Hospitals Less

By: Alex Cukan
Provided by: Family Hospice

U.S. nursing-home residents in hospice care have less chance of being hospitalized their last 30 days of life compared to those who didn't get hospice care.

"Our study provides strong evidence that access to hospice in nursing homes significantly reduces hospitalization," said study author Pedro Gozalo and co-investigator Susan Miller of Brown Medical School in Providence, R.I.

The researchers examine data from 183,742 nursing home residents in five states.

People who chose hospice, which focuses on comfort instead of cure, tend to refuse aggressive end-of-life treatment, but even taking that into consideration, hospice still makes a significant difference in keeping people out of the hospital in their last days, according to Gozalo.

"Families of nursing home residents need to know hospice is an option and that their loved one is entitled to the Medicare hospice benefit," said Dr. Susan Mitchell, of Harvard Medical School.

white, while about 12 percent is black, according to the Census Bureau.

The California HealthCare Foundation issued a report in March that found some minorities and immigrants view hospice care as a way for doctors to deny them the medical care they've been fighting to get.

New Beacon director Debbie Cox said one of her goals is to reassure minorities that hospices provide a service they should consider.

"Once they see that I'm here to help you take care of your loved one, then they warm up to you a little bit," Cox said.

Some hospices are trying to reach more blacks through church programs.

"While I hate to generalize, African-Americans tend to rely a great deal on their spirituality and faith communities when dealing with serious illness," Radulovic said. "Further education to the faith leaders is an important part of outreach to that community."

David Stone, executive director of the Alabama Hospice Organization, said hospices also are trying to get information to Hispanics, including Spanish-language materials and making contact in faith-based community settings and gathering places.

In addition to trying to gain more minority patients, hospices are working to hire more minority employees.

"Hospices are really trying to make sure they as hospice providers are actually more multicultural themselves," Stone said.

He said patients generally want to be cared for by people they can relate to. "When you're dealing with someone at such a vulnerable time, it's understandable that you'd want someone you feel you have a connection with," Stone said.

To save time and trees, if we have an e-mail address for you, starting this month you are receiving this newsletter by e-mail only, rather than by "snail mail." If you would rather receive the paper version instead, please call or e-mail us and let us know.

The e-mail newsletter will give you immediate access to our websites www.CoulsonLawGroup.com, www.QualifyForMedicaid.com, and www.BetterEstatePlanning.com, where you will be able to access the archives of previous newsletters and find a lot of additional information on subjects of interest. There will even be a link you can use to ask any follow-up questions you may have about the newsletter articles, or to make any comments or suggestions. We will respond personally and privately.

We're on the web!
www.betterestateplanning.com
www.qualifyformedicaid.com
www.coulsonlawgroup.com

Hospice Care and Planning is written by the attorneys of The Coulson Law Group, Wesley J. Coulson and Joseph Ilges, and is published as a service of The Coulson Law Group, 1001 Craig Road, Suite 224, St. Louis, Missouri 63146; 107 Southpointe Drive, Suite 2, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025. This is for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions, you should consult a qualified attorney.

Advertising Material. Commercial solicitations are permitted by the Missouri and Illinois rules of professional conduct but are neither submitted to nor approved by the Missouri or Illinois Bar or the Supreme Court of Missouri or Illinois. The choice of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be based solely on advertisements.