



## New Study Shows Hospice Care Saves Medicare an Average of \$2,309 per Hospice User

A major new study from Duke University published in the October '07 issue of the journal "Social Science & Medicine" shows hospice care in America saves money for Medicare and brings quality care to patients and their families. The study reinforces what hospice professionals have long known according to the National Hospice Foundation.

The study demonstrated that:

- Hospice reduced Medicare costs by an average of \$2,309 per hospice patient.
- Use of hospice decreased Medicare expenditures for cancer patients until the 233rd day of care and until the 153rd day of care for non-cancer patients.
- Increasing length of hospice use by just three days would increase savings due to hospice by nearly 10 percent, from around \$2,300 to \$2,500 per hospice user.
- Medicare costs would be reduced for seven out of ten hospice recipients if hospice has been used for a longer period of time the study found.

"Given that hospice has been widely demonstrated to improve quality of life of patients and families...the Medicare program appears to have a rare situation whereby something that improves quality of life also appears to reduce costs," writes lead author Don H. Taylor, Jr., assistant professor of public policy at Duke's Sanford Institute of Public Policy.

According to The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, 1.3 million patients received care from the nation's 4,500 hospice providers last year. Approximately 35 percent of all deaths in the US were under the care of a hospice program.

"The trends for increased usage of hospice are expected to continue as we see an aging generation of baby-boomers face end-of-life situations for themselves and their parents—to know definitively that hospice provides a cost savings to Medicare is an additional benefit," said J. Donald Schumacher, NHF president.