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# Quick Facts & Stats

## End-of-Life Issues and Attitudes

Patients, 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 care.

**75%** of Americans favor advance directives, although only 30% to 35% of them actually write them.

(AARP, 2003)

**92%** of cancer patients in one study had heard about advance directives primarily through the media.

(*American Journal of Critical Care*, 1999)

**5%** 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%** of US 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%** of US 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 1-year period. Most of these were white, elderly, and lived in 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%** or more hospice patients are incontinent.

(*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 2003)

**58%** of white physicians in one study agreed that tube-feeding in terminally ill patients is "heroic," while only 28% of African American physicians agreed.

(*Journal of the American Geriatric Society*, 1999)