

REPORT SUGGESTS FOR-PROFIT HOSPICES UTILIZE LONGER PERIODS OF SERVICE

Earlier this week, **McKnight's** reported on a study from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York relating to the length of stay at for-profit versus nonprofit hospice providers. This study showed that, of the 600 Medicare certified hospices nationwide, for-profit hospices were more likely to have patients with a longer expected stay than nonprofit hospices.

The study showed that 30% of patients at for-profit hospices had a longer expected stay, compared to 25% in nonprofits. While a five percentage point difference may not be statistically meaningful, the report also showed for-profit hospices exceeded the Medicare annual cap on reimbursement 22% of the time, versus 4% for nonprofits.

This study was performed at a medical school; however, their findings align with OIG concerns over length of stay issues for hospice providers. The 2014 OIG Work Plan added a new focus area for hospices providing services in assisted living facilities. The OIG states assisted living residents utilize the longest lengths of stay in hospice care and it plans to increase monitoring of hospice services in assisted living.

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