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Increased Awareness by Primary Care Physicians Could Boost Hospice Utilization
Review of recent study support conclusion that physician involvement in end-of-life care leads to reduced health expenses

FALLS CHURCH, VA (July 21, 2017) – Jordan A. Keen, MD, and Matthew G. Kestenbaum, MD, both Board-certified hospice and palliative care physicians at Capital Caring, reviewed an article published in January in *Annals of Family Medicine* that focused on regional variations in primary care provided at end-of-life and corroborated previous findings regarding the importance of PCPs in EOL care. They offered several potential explanations for the reduced hospice utilization amongst this cadre of patients, including a fear of losing a long-established PCP relationship or impaired ability of new physicians to accurately treat an individual facing end-of-life concerns.

“We know that individuals facing advanced illness have specific physical, emotional, and spiritual needs that hospice providers are uniquely positioned to address,” remarked Dr. Kestenbaum. “There exists the possibility that primary care physicians are not aware of the benefits of hospice care for those patients dealing with end-of-life stress or that many people live longer when under hospice care than those who do not access this level of care. We agree that more education about hospice care aimed at primary care physicians could improve the care provided to individuals under their care. At the end of the day, we all want to ensure each of our patients lives as full a life as possible for as long as possible, and access to hospice care is an essential component of the full continuum of healthcare.”

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Reviews such as this one, published in *Palliative Care – Fast Article Critical Summaries for Clinicians in Palliative Care (PC-FACS)*, provide valuable summaries of key recently published research for clinicians specializing in the care and treatment of individuals facing advanced illness. As a testament to its commitment to excellence in care and the distribution of knowledge to support the care of individuals across the country, Capital Caring is honored that Dr.

Kestenbaum serves on the Editorial Board of PC-FACS, which is published by the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

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About Capital Caring: Since 1977, Capital Caring has simply improved care for those facing life-limiting illness through direct support of patients and their families, public education and advocacy. Since its inception, Capital Caring has provided hospice, palliative care, and counseling to nearly 110,000 patients and their families. Almost 800 employees and 1,000 volunteers provide these services to nearly 1,400 patients each day. As one of the nation's oldest and largest non-profit providers of hospice and palliative care, Capital Caring is proud to provide nearly \$3 million in charitable care to families in need annually. To learn more about Capital Caring, visit www.capitalcaring.org or call 800-869-2136.