Improving End of Life Care: Why Has it Been So Difficult?

Developing a summative report on progress in the end-of-life field

SUMMARY

The Hastings Center published a special report, Improving End of Life Care: Why Has It Been So Difficult?, as a supplement to the November/December 2005 issue of the Hastings Center Report. (Available online.)

The goal of the special report was to assess progress in end-of-life care in the decade following dissemination of results from SUPPORT (Study to Understand Prognoses and Preferences and Risks of Treatment), a $28-million randomized clinical trial funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). (For more on SUPPORT, see the 1997 RWJF Anthology.)

Key Results

The Hasting Center:

- Published the special report Improving End of Life Care: Why Has It Been So Difficult? as a supplement to the November/December 2005 issue of the Hastings Center Report, and as a freestanding publication. (The report is available online.)
  - The peer-reviewed report includes 10 commissioned essays by a multidisciplinary panel of ethicists, legal scholars, nursing and medical faculty and clinicians.

- Contracted with two communications firms to help disseminate the special report:
  - Sojourn Communications coordinated distribution of the supplement to organizations in the end-of-life field.
  - Burness Communications convened a briefing on Capitol Hill in Washington on November 10, 2005, for legislators and the media.

- Distributed some 5,000 copies of the special report as a supplement to the Hastings Center Report.
• Distributed an additional 19,500 copies to end-of-life experts and organizations, legislators, members of the media and others.

• As of July 2008, 6,373 copies of the report have been downloaded from the Hastings Center website.

**Funding**

RWJF provided a grant of $266,085 from December 2004 through September 2007 to support the project.

**Afterward**

The Hastings Center has secured funding from the Donaghue Foundation for a three-year project to update its 1987 *Guidelines on the Termination of Life-Sustaining Treatment and Care of the Dying*. The book-length document, tentatively entitled *The Hastings Center Guidelines on End of Life Care*, is expected to be completed by 2010.

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