Nursing Support of Home Hospice Caregivers on the Day of Patient Death

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During the past five years, hospice use has increased by almost 20%, with most home hospice patients receiving care provided by informal caregivers, often family members and friends (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, 2015). Taking on a caregiving role can be physically and emotionally burdensome and has serious implications for caregiver physical health and well-being (Williams & McCorkle, 2011). Patients with advanced cancer admitted to hospice often experience a rapidly deteriorating physical status, contributing to caregiver burden (Teno, Weitzen, Fennell, & Mor, 2001). Research has shown that supporting the caregiver can reduce the burden of caregiving (Epstein & Street, 2007; Hebert, Schulz, Copeland, & Arnold, 2009; Williams & McCorkle, 2011).