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Palliative Care in Canada and the United States

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<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/68/BlankMap-USA-states-Canada-provinces.>

Presentation Overview

Health Systems:

Canada

United States

Palliative Care:

Case Study

Orlando

Edmonton

Conclusions

Medicare: age 65+ & eligibility criteria

Medicaid: coverage for select groups

Health Insurance: mix of public and private, many issues

Estimated 50 million individuals in the US do not have insurance
(15%)

*Cost of health care is the highest in the world but health care outcomes are not
better than other, similar nations*

(IOM, 2015; Schoen et al., 2013)

BACKGROUND

HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

Universal health care

Publicly Funded

Provincially administered (13 plans)

Covers “medically necessary” services

Private Health Insurance: supplements Universal health care benefits

Estimated 200,000 - 500,000 individuals in Canada do not have
health care coverage (1.4%)

(Government of Canada, 2016; Health for all, 2018)

BACKGROUND HEALTH CARE IN CANADA

Commonalities: US & Canada

- Aging baby boom generation
- Common demographics and disease characteristics > 65 year old
- Culturally diverse populations
- Cancer-related deaths:
 - 30% Canada
 - ~ 25% US

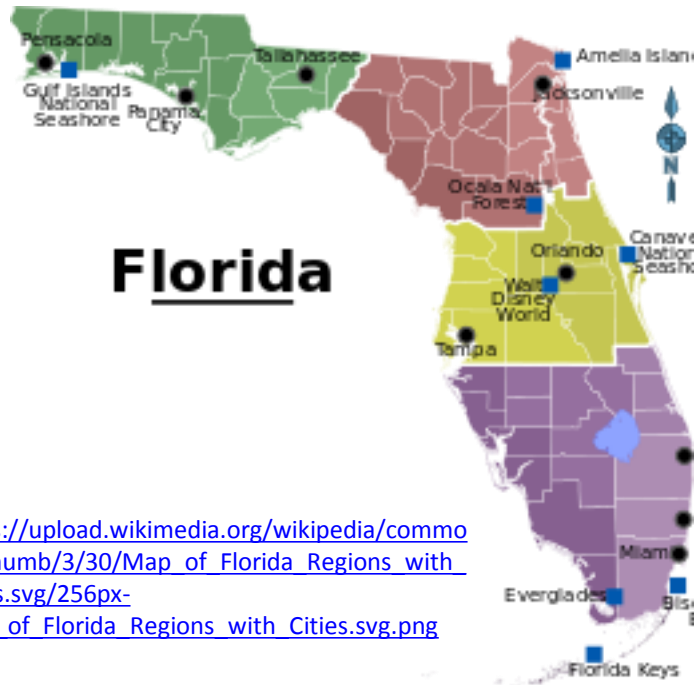
(Ho et al., 2011; IOM 2015)

Case Study: Bill Smith

- Social:
 - Age 68
 - Married, three children, live in different cities
 - Spouse: unstable diabetic
- Diagnosis:
 - Metastatic colorectal cancer
 - Progression on treatment
 - Poor performance status
 - Palliative approach to care



<https://pixabay.com/en/grandparents-old-couple-elderly-1800224/>



Florida

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/30/Map_of_Florida_Regions_with_Cities.svg/256px-Map_of_Florida_Regions_with_Cities.svg.png



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d6/Alberta_map.svg/256px-Alberta_map.svg.png

PALLIATIVE CARE: ORLANDO, USA & EDMONTON, CANADA

Palliative Care: Orlando & Edmonton

Care Options:

- Outpatient palliative care
- Home hospice
- Hospice with nursing home/assisted living facility
- Inpatient hospice care
- Hospital care

Hospice criteria: terminal illness, prognosis <6 months

Palliative Care: Orlando & Edmonton

Team based care:

- Physician
- Nurse
- Social worker
- Psychologist
- Spiritual counselor
- Pharmacist

Palliative care available for chronic diseases, not confined to cancer.

Palliative Care: Orlando & Edmonton

Options for Bill:

- Remain at home:
 - Outpatient palliative care
 - Home hospice care
 - Medication & equipment provided
 - Multidisciplinary care
- Last days:
 - 24-hour nursing care

Palliative Care: Orlando & Edmonton

Options for Bill:

- Respite care:
 - Short term admission to support patient/family
- Unable to stay home:
 - Nursing home/assisted living with concurrent hospice care
 - Hospice admission
 - Hospital admission for uncontrollable symptoms

Palliative Care: United States

Orlando, Florida

Medicare/Medicaid coverage:

- Medical/nursing
- Prescription drugs for symptom control
- Hospice aide and homemaker
- Multidisciplinary services
- Short-term inpatient care for symptom management or respite (Conditions apply)
- Other Medicare-covered services related to symptom management recommended by hospice team

Have to be covered under Medicare Part A type of plan

Palliative Care: Canada

Edmonton, Alberta

Alberta Health Care:

- Medical/nursing
- Prescription drugs for symptom control
- Hospice aide and homemaker
- Multidisciplinary services
- Short-term inpatient care for symptom management or respite
- Symptom management services recommended by family doctor, palliative care consultant or oncologist

Key Differences

Orlando (US):

- Care coordinated by hospice team
- Family physician (FP) role unclear
- FP not reimbursed for conversations on advance care planning
- Medicare available to age 65+ or those receiving special disability benefits
- Uninsured - Problems of access and affordability
- Hospice is a business:
 - Reliance on grants and philanthropy for sustainability
 - Multiple agencies with variable standards

(Palliative Care Ad Hoc Committee, 2016)

Key Differences

Edmonton (Canada):

- Care coordinated by family physician (FP) and home care nurse
- FP extra reimbursement for palliative care office or home visit
- Special Palliative Blue Cross Insurance coverage for medications
- Specialist palliative team (MD & RN) 24/7 availability for phone, home or hospice consult
- Tertiary unit for management of acute symptoms
- Hospices are publicly funded and regulated

United States:
Not covered under Federal Law
Not allowed in Florida

Canada:
Covered under Federal Law
Allowed in Alberta
Specially trained physicians

OTHER ISSUES: PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

United States:

No coverage

Canada:

Covered under Federal Law

Allowed in Alberta

Government covers six months of earnings for family members providing palliative care

**OTHER ISSUES: COMPASSIONATE CARE
EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

Conclusions

Bill can receive potentially similar services in both countries

Challenges with insurance coverage and co-payments in the US

Variable standards of hospice care in the US

Physician assisted suicide only available in some states

Compassionate care employment benefits in Canada

Your thoughts?



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