



End of Life Care: The Checkbook Is Open

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Medical malpractice lawsuits are so frequently blamed for the high cost of medical care that when another, actual cause (not apocryphal, like lawsuits) of expensive medicine comes around, it's almost hard to believe. Exhibit A: End of Life care. This is the single most expensive segment of Medicare -- the last 30 days of someone's life, when aggressive practitioners throw everything they've got at an elderly patient's failing body to see if a miracle might result.

It's also a time of life that is virtually immune from malpractice suits. Few if any lawyers would take a case that argued the doctors were insufficiently aggressive, and Grandma might have lived a few more months.

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The practitioners are not aggressive solely because they're paid to be, although it cannot hurt. Families in denial often egg doctors on to do everything possible technologically, when what the dying patient needs is peace, comfort and a chance to be with one's relatives.

Here's [a story](#) on end of life care, courtesy of one of our favorite blogs, The Pop Tort.

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