



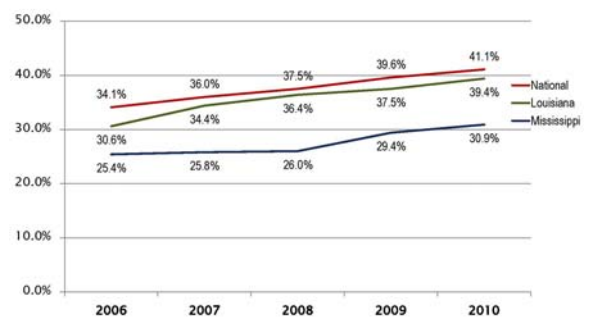
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**LMHPCO Journal Article:  
Hospice Utilization in Louisiana & Mississippi – New 2010 Medicare Data**

Hospice utilization continues to increase in Louisiana and Mississippi, and grows closer to the national average. According to the newly released 2010 Medicare hospice claims, hospice utilization (i.e., the number of Medicare beneficiaries dying under hospice service / total Medicare beneficiaries dying) is increasing:

- **National: 41.1% - up 7% in the past 5 years**
- **Louisiana: 39.4% - up 8.8% in the past 5 years**
- **Mississippi: 30.9% - 5.5% in the past 5 years**

2010 Medicare Hospice Utilization:  
Medicare Hospice Deaths / Medicare Total Deaths

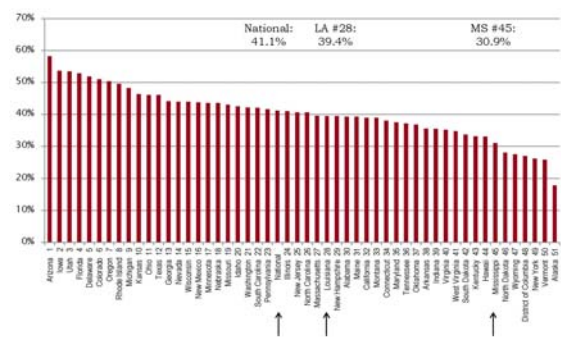


When comparing Louisiana and Mississippi hospice utilization rates to other states:

- **Louisiana: Ranks #28 – up from #31 in 2006**
- **Mississippi: Ranks #45 – down from #42 in 2006**

Therefore, Louisiana hospice utilization has grown slightly faster than other states, while other states have grown slightly faster than Mississippi. Hospice Utilization (also referred to as “Death Service Ratio”) is under consideration as a hospice quality measure<sup>1</sup>, indicating access to and utilization of hospice services.

2010 Hospice Utilization  
Medicare Hospice Deaths / Total Medicare Deaths



**Discharged Alive vs. Discharged Deceased:** Note that hospice utilization is based on a hospice discharge status= deceased. Mississippi would rank much higher if hospice utilization was based on hospice admissions (without regard to discharge status). However, CMS, the OIG, and MedPAC are all raising

<sup>1</sup> Abernethy AP, Kassner CT, Whitten E, Bull J, Taylor DH. Death Service Ratio: A Measure of Hospice Utilization and Cost Impact. J Pain Symptom Manage 2011; 41(#6 June):e5-6.

awareness regarding the percentage of hospice beneficiaries discharged alive – with questions regarding hospice eligibility at admission. According to 2010 Medicare hospice data, nationally 11.6% of hospice beneficiaries were discharge alive. Mississippi (26.4%), Oklahoma (23.1%), and Alabama (20.7%) had the highest state averages of beneficiaries discharged alive in the country. Michigan, Connecticut, and Rhode Island had lowest state averages of beneficiaries discharged alive in the country – all below 8%. The issue of hospice discharge status is expected to garner more attention in the near future.