



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

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As President of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM), I am saddened by the unconscionable practices reported in Ava Kofman's article, *How Hospice Became a For-Profit Hustle*. There is no place for those who prey on vulnerable populations for their own financial gain. They must be identified and held to account.

As a physician who has dedicated more than twenty years caring for patients who are seriously ill, I have seen the tremendous compassion, dedication and skill of interdisciplinary hospice teams who care for dying patients and their families. The activities chronicled in the article stand in stark contrast to the mission of AAHPM and our members. Bad actors make it harder for all good programs to provide the care that is sorely needed.

Skillful interdisciplinary hospice care provides life-changing relief from debilitating physical symptoms as well as the psychological and practical challenges that often complicate the end of life. More than 1.7 million Americans benefited from hospice care in 2020. The need will continue to grow in coming years. The needs of seriously ill Americans today are strikingly different than they were 40 years ago when the Medicare Hospice Benefit was created. There is no doubt that change is needed.

Disenfranchised, rural and underserved communities often struggle to access care. AAHPM vigorously condemns any practices that exploit marginalized communities and people of color. Sadly, the practices described further perpetuate a mistrust of healthcare that compounds access inequalities.

We will continue to fight for a system that allows patients and families living with serious illness to receive the care that they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Tara C. Friedman, MD, FAAHPM". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Tara Friedman, MD, FAAHPM
President, American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine