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By Emily Reagle Transue, M.D.

Going home

The patient was elderly, cranky, and in the final stage of severe lung disease. Was there any point in putting her on a ventilator? Could she possibly recover sufficiently to go home?

This true story by a DMS graduate shows that medical decisions are rarely clear-cut and that some patients defy all the odds.

Emily Transue, a 1996 graduate of Dartmouth Medical School, just finished her residency and a chief residency in internal medicine at the University of Washington. She is now in private practice in Seattle. This story is true, though identifying details have been changed: it took place during Transue’s internship year in Seattle. She says that “Ethel Lea” died, quite suddenly of lung cancer, about two years after the events in this story took place.