

National Hospice and Palliative Care
Organization



March 29, 2017

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Eliot Engel
United States House of Representatives
2462 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Reed
United States House of Representatives
2437 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Baldwin, Senator Capito, Congressman Engel and Congressman Reed,

On behalf of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), our more than 1,200 members, and the more than 1.5 million patients and family caregivers our members care for each year, we are proud to support *the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA)*. This legislation will ensure that a sufficient number of well-trained palliative care professionals is available to care for individuals with serious illness and at the end of life.

Hospice and palliative care are both patient-centered models of care that address patients' physical, emotional, psychosocial, spiritual and familial needs. Both hospice and palliative care utilize inter-disciplinary teams of providers who optimize quality of life by anticipating, preventing, and treating suffering. In a 2010 study published in *the New England Journal of Medicine*, patients that received palliative care early after diagnosis had a better quality of life, experienced less frequent depression, and lived longer than their counterparts who did not receive palliative care.

Unfortunately, research from the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine indicates that there is a shortage of adequately trained hospice or palliative care providers. Moreover, the current rates of educating and training medical professionals in palliative care will not be sufficient to ensure aging Americans access to quality palliative care. A 2017 study by the George Washington University Healthcare Institute estimates that there will be no more than 1 percent growth in the palliative care and hospice physician workforce in the next 20 years, while the number of people eligible for palliative care will increase by over 20 percent. Without a boost for palliative care education and training, there will be only one palliative physician for every 26,000 seriously ill patients by 2030.

Your legislation addresses this problem by providing palliative medicine training in a variety of settings, including hospice. This legislation will also establish a program to enable hospice and palliative physicians to train teams of interdisciplinary healthcare professionals in palliative and hospice care techniques. Additionally, PCHETA will expand the types of professionals trained to

provide hospice care, including nurses and clinical social workers. NHPCO strongly supports this effort and encourages its prompt consideration and passage.

Thank you for your outstanding leadership on palliative and hospice care education. We look forward to working with you on this and other legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edo Banach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "B".

Edo Banach, J.D.
President and CEO