



June 10, 2015

Senator Mark Warner
475 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Johnny Isakson
131 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Warner and Isakson:

On behalf of hospice programs across the nation, their professionals, volunteers and most importantly, the patients and families they serve, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization continues its strong support of the *Care Planning Act*. This legislation will strengthen the quality of end-of-life care, and make it more cost-efficient through enhanced resources for patients and families to promote more informed choices and prevent unnecessary and costly medical procedures.

Your legislation will ensure that patients and families are able to navigate the journey at the end of life with the necessary information and support that will bring dignity, quality care, and hope when they are most needed. For more than 30 years, hospices have been providing high-quality, coordinated interdisciplinary care to people at one of life's most challenging times—and research has shown hospice saves Medicare more than \$2 billion every year. The Planning Services benefit and the Advanced Illness Coordination Services demonstration project proposed in this legislation, in particular, use the knowledge and expertise of the hospice and palliative care community in valuable new ways.

Research has shown that individuals who have discussions about end-of-life care have less invasive medical treatments, and a higher quality of life. We are pleased that your bill enhances access to additional resources for end-of-life care planning, including a new transitional benefit delivered by hospice teams for patients with advanced illnesses and expanded use of advance directives. We also applaud the emphasis on increased public awareness of the importance of end-of-life planning through the development of new resources and communication strategies regarding advance care planning.

The *Care Planning Act* will give patients and their families coping with advanced and life-limiting illnesses knowledge and access to the kind of information and services they need. The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization enthusiastically endorses your bill, and appreciates your support for strengthening high-quality and compassionate care for millions of Americans, including the over 1.3 million who choose hospice each year.

Sincerely,

J. Donald Schumacher, PsyD
President/CEO