



May 20, 2016

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal and Senator Capito:

On behalf of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), I am writing to express our support for the *Compassionate Care Act*.

NHPCO is the largest nonprofit membership organization representing hospice and palliative care programs and professionals in the United States. We represent over 4,000 hospice programs that care for the majority of hospice patients in the country. NHPCO is committed to ensuring that all Americans – and their families - can access high-quality, compassionate end-of-life care.

A Gallup poll reveals that close to nine in ten adults (88%) would prefer to die in their homes, free of pain, surrounded by family and loved ones. Unfortunately, far too few Americans adequately plan for advanced illness and end-of-life care. A 2014 NHPCO survey showed that only 26.3 percent of respondents had an advance directive.

However, a 2014 study by the Institute of Medicine determined that more robust and frequent care planning improve Americans' ability to prepare for advanced illness and ensure that their end-of-life wishes are honored. Further, standardized systems for filing and storing advanced directives ensure that health care providers can access and implement patients' end-of-life plans.

The Compassionate Care Act promotes education and awareness about advanced care planning so that patients and their families can have discussions *before* they are confronted with advanced illness. By promoting provider education and the development of quality measures, physicians will have opportunities to work toward standards and training requirements to ensure the best care planning conversations with their patients and families.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization supports this bill, and applauds your leadership in promoting and strengthening advance care planning nationwide.

Sincerely,

J. Donald Schumacher, PsyD
President/CEO