

## ***Cosponsor the Compassionate Care Act***

*Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) & Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)*

With a rapidly aging Medicare population, more attention must be paid – and federal support provided - to ensure that individuals and families receive the highest-quality advanced illness and end of life care. Advanced illness occurs when one or more conditions become serious enough that general health and functioning decline, curative treatment begins to lose its effect, and quality of life increasingly becomes the focus of care - a process that continues to the end of life. Documenting end-of-life wishes assures that loved ones will receive care aligned with their wishes. And yet, recent research shows that while 42% of individuals have had discussion on end-of-life issues, only 21% put their care directives in writing, and 90% said that their physician never asked about this issue.

Furthermore, according to a recent poll conducted by The John A. Hartford Foundation, 46% of physicians reported frequently or sometimes feeling unsure of how to conduct advance care planning or end-of-life conversations. Additionally, less than 29% of the physicians surveyed had received any formal training on how to talk with patients and families about end-of-life care.

The *Compassionate Care Act* aims to address these issues by providing federal support to educate consumers and providers, develop core end-of-life care quality measures, and tests innovations in advance care planning via telemedicine.

The Compassionate Care Act contains three key elements:

### **Consumer Education—**

- Develops and implements a *national public education campaign* to raise awareness of palliative and hospice care and encourages individuals to engage with qualified health care professionals.

### **Provider Education—**

- Supports the *development of core end-of-life quality measures* across each relevant qualified health care provider setting.
- Establishes a *pilot program in advance care curricula* that will allow qualified health care providers to further develop their skills on how to discuss and help patients and their loved ones with advance care planning, palliative care, medical and legal issues associated with this area, and specialized pediatric care; while also including training in cultural competency measures.
- Supports the expansion and *development of continuing education* programs on advance care planning and end-of-life as well as create a public provider advance care planning website to provide access to critical resources and new developments in this area.

### **Supports Innovation—**

- Establishes a demonstration project to reimburse eligible entities for costs associated with the use of *telemedicine services to provide advance care planning*.
- Directs the HHS Secretary to conduct a study on the establishment and implementation of a *national uniform policy on advance directives*.
- Supports GAO study and report on establishment of *national advance directive registry*.

For more information, or to sign on as a cosponsor, please contact ([Khaliyl\\_lane@blumenthal.senate.gov](mailto:Khaliyl_lane@blumenthal.senate.gov))

### **SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS**

The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care • American Osteopathic Association • Pew Charitable Trusts • American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging • National Partnership for Hospice Innovation • Elder Justice Coalition • Visiting Nurse Associations of America • National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization • American Heart Association • CT State Department on Aging • National Association of Home Care & Hospice • Hosparus •