

May 19, 2022

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
709 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

RE: Support for the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA)

Dear Senators Baldwin and Capito:

The undersigned organizations write to express our support for the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA). This bipartisan legislation will make a difference in the lives of millions of patients living with serious or life-threatening illness and their caregivers.

Despite a high intensity of medical treatment, many seriously ill individuals still experience troubling symptoms, unmet psychological and personal care needs, fragmented care, poor communication with their health care providers, and enormous strains on their family caregivers. However, numerous studies have shown that adding palliative care can improve pain and symptom control, quality of life, and patient and family satisfaction.

Palliative care is an interdisciplinary model of care focused on relief of the pain, stress and other debilitating symptoms of serious illness, such as cancer, cardiac disease, respiratory disease, kidney failure, Alzheimer's, AIDS, ALS, and MS. Its goal is to relieve suffering and provide the best possible quality of life for patients and their families. Palliative care can be offered simultaneously with life-prolonging and curative therapies for persons living with serious, complex, and eventually terminal illness and includes hospice care. By its very nature, palliative care is patient-centered care — translating patient goals to appropriate treatments.

We appreciate your leadership in recognizing the significant role palliative care and hospice can play in creating lasting change across the health care system. With PCHETA's focus on expanding the interdisciplinary palliative care workforce, promoting awareness of the benefits of palliative care among patient and providers, and improving the evidence base for this care, you have demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing key barriers to palliative care access for the growing number of Americans with serious or life-threatening illness.

Delivery of high-quality palliative care cannot take place without sufficient numbers of health care professionals with appropriate training and skills. Students graduating from medical, nursing or health care professional schools today have very little, if any, training in the core precepts of pain and symptom management, advance care planning, communication skills, and care coordination for patients with serious or life-threatening illness. Further, there is a large gap between the number of health care professionals with palliative care training and the number required to meet the needs of the expanding population of seriously ill patients. PCHETA would go a long way towards bridging this gap by establishing education centers and career incentive awards to improve the training of doctors, nurses, physician assistants, social workers and other health professionals in palliative care.

PCHETA also aims to strengthen clinical practice and improve health care delivery for patients living with serious or life-threatening illness, as well as their families, by directing funding toward palliative care research. Research funding for palliative care and pain and symptom management comprises less than 0.1 percent of the National Institutes of Health annual budget. PCHETA would direct an expansion and intensification of research in these important areas.

At the same time, more must be done to ensure patients and providers are aware of the benefits of palliative care. According to the Institute of Medicine, there is a "need for better understanding of the role of palliative care among both the public and professionals across the continuum of care." PCHETA would direct the implementation of a national education and awareness campaign so that patients, families, and

health professionals understand the essential role of palliative care in ensuring high-quality care for individuals facing serious or life-threatening illness.

We appreciate your continued leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance PCHETA in the 117th Congress.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association
Alzheimer's Impact Movement
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative
Medicine
American Academy of PA's
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Surgeons
American Geriatrics Society
American Heart Association
American Psychological Association
American Psychosocial Oncology Society
Association for Clinical Oncology
Association of Oncology Social Work
Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Nurses
Association of Professional Chaplains
The California State University Shiley Haynes
Institute for Palliative Care
Cambia Health Solutions
Cancer Support Community
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center to Advance Palliative Care
Children's National Health System
Coalition for Compassionate Care of California
Colorectal Cancer Alliance
Compassus
Courageous Parents Network
ElevateHOME | Visiting Nurse Associations of
America
The George Washington Institute for Spirituality
and Health

GO₂ Foundation for Lung Cancer
HealthCare Chaplaincy Network
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Motion Picture & Television Fund
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Brain Tumor Society
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care
National Comprehensive Cancer Network
National Hospice and Palliative Care
Organization | Hospice Action Network
National Palliative Care Research Center
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National POLST Paradigm
Oncology Nursing Society
Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition
Physician Assistants in Hospice and Palliative
Medicine
Prevent Cancer Foundation
ResolutionCare, a Vynca company
Social Work Hospice & Palliative Care Network
Society of Pain and Palliative Care Pharmacists
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Supportive Care Matters
Susan G. Komen
Trinity Health
VITAS Healthcare
West Health Institute