



Leadership Council  
of Aging Organizations

*James Firman, Chair*

December 20, 2017

The Honorable Mark Warner  
U.S. Senate  
475 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Johnny Isakson  
U.S. Senate  
131 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1111 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Phil Roe  
U.S. House of Representatives  
336 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Warner and Isakson and Representatives Blumenauer and Roe:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena.

The undersigned LCAO members are writing in strong support of your legislation, the *Patient Choice and Quality Care Act of 2017* (S.1334 & H.R.2797). We appreciate your steadfast efforts to ensure that older adults living with advanced illness or nearing the end-of-life receive person- and family-centered care that is well coordinated and honors their dignity, values, and health care choices at each stage of their illness. Older adults must have access to the full range of high-quality medical care and treatment, including curative care, palliative care, and hospice care, and we believe that your leadership and legislation will help move us toward this aim. Your bill addresses a host of issues that currently challenge our nation's ability to achieve this important goal.

In 2016, LCAO adopted Advanced Care, Hospice, and End-of-Life Principles (attached), which are well-reflected in the key provisions of the *Patient Choice and Quality Care Act of 2017*.

We strongly support the key elements of your bill which:

- Create a new Medicare model for Advanced Illness Care and Management that will provide eligible Medicare beneficiaries the opportunity to voluntarily engage the services of an interdisciplinary team to plan care interventions that are directly aligned with the individual's goals of care, values, and preferences and are designed to meet the beneficiary's physical, medical, psychosocial, emotional and spiritual needs, as well as support family caregivers;
- Improve existing policies related to the portability of advance directives so that individuals' and family caregivers' treatment decisions are honored, and providers have the support tools they need - regardless of the state or site of care;
- Require that healthcare facilities must assure that care plans made while an individual receives care are appropriately documented prior to discharge and sent to appropriate providers and facilities upon discharge;
- Fund \$50 million in grants to increase public awareness of advance care planning and advanced illness care;

- Expand Medicare coverage for advance care planning (ACP) to include ACP services provided by independent clinical social workers who have appropriate training or experience, as well as by ensuring that any Medicare-covered ACP service is not subject to deductible or coinsurance; and
- Encourage development of a more robust set of end-of-life quality measures for use in various health care settings.

Decisions about advanced illness and end-of-life care are of profound importance to individuals and their caregivers. The changes you are proposing promise to significantly enhance the manner in which our health care system addresses the complex needs of individuals with advanced illness, and improve the overall quality of life for countless Medicare beneficiaries and their loved ones.

LCAO looks forward to working with you as the *Patient Choice and Quality Care Act of 2017* moves through the legislative process to ensure that your policy goals are accomplished.

Sincerely,

AARP

Aging Life Care Association

Alzheimer's Association of America

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine

American Association of Service Coordinators

American Geriatrics Society (AGS)

American Society on Aging (ASA)

Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores (ANPPM)

Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (AGHDHBCU)

Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America

B'nai B'rith International

Caring Across Generations

Center for Elder Care & Advanced Illness, Altarum

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Community Catalyst

Compassion & Choices

Easterseals

ElevatingHOME

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)

International Association for Indigenous Aging (IA<sup>2</sup>)

Justice in Aging

LeadingAge

Lutheran Services in America

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA)

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)

National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)

National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC)

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Association of Retired Senior Volunteer Program Directors (NARSVPD)

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)

National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD)

National Center for Creative Aging

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare  
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
National Council on Aging (NCOA)  
National Senior Corps Association (NSCA)  
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER)

cc:

House Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi  
Senate Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer  
House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone  
House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal  
Senate Finance Committee Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden