

November 29, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Request to include PCHETA, S. 4260, in end-of-year package

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy:

As Congress begins consideration of the year-end legislative package, the Patient Quality of Life Coalition (PQLC) and the undersigned organizations urge you to include the bipartisan *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA)*, S. 4260 in the 117th Congress, in an end of year package.

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 and 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 pain, stress, and other debilitating symptoms for individuals with 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 and complex illnesses. Palliative care, while distinct from hospice, is also always a part of hospice care for people whose illness is terminal. By its very nature, palliative care is patient-centered care — translating patient goals to appropriate treatments.

Palliative care can play a significant role in creating lasting change across the health care system. PCHETA would expand the interdisciplinary palliative care workforce, promote awareness of the benefits of palliative care among patients and providers, and improve the evidence base for this care.

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 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 that patients and providers are aware of the benefits of palliative care. According to the 2014 report from 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 illness.

PCHETA enjoys strong bipartisan support. In the 116th Congress, H.R. 647 had 295 cosponsors and the House of Representatives passed it by voice vote in both the 116th and 115th Congresses. Currently, S. 4260 has 24 cosponsors. In addition, the bill is [supported](#) by more than 50 national organizations and 25 state organizations, including the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, the Alzheimer’s Association, the American Heart Association, the Center to Advance Palliative Care, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, the Oncology Nursing Society, the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care, Children’s National Hospital and others.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request to invest in the palliative care and hospice workforce and to support this interprofessional, team-based approach to patient care.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer’s Association
Alzheimer’s Impact Movement
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Geriatrics Society
Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses
CaringKind, The Heart of Alzheimer’s Caregiving
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center to Advance Palliative Care
Children’s National Hospital
Coalition for Compassionate Care of California
HealthCare Chaplaincy Network
Hospice Action Network
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Motion Picture & Television Fund
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Brain Tumor Society
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
National Palliative Care Research Center
Oncology Nursing Society
Palliative Care Quality Collaborative
Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition
PAs in Hospice and Palliative Medicine
St. Baldrick’s Foundation
Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network
Society of Pain and Palliative Care Pharmacists
Susan G. Komen
Trinity Health

cc: The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Richard Burr
The Honorable Frank Pallone
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito