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Enact The Patient Choice And Quality Care Act of 2017

Background:

To maximize quality of life and ensure that patients have a full understanding of their care options, Medicare beneficiaries need access to multi-disciplinary, advanced-illness care and coordination, as well as appropriate support to develop advance care plans. Beyond care and assistance in development of advance directives, our nation must ensure that advance directives, once executed, are honored. Finally, to improve quality of care for individuals with advanced illness, additional resources must be invested in the development of a more robust set of quality measures that are applicable to advanced illness, palliative, and end-of-life care.

Issue/Concerns:

Our nation's growing elderly population has increasingly complex health care needs that place them at greater risk for difficult care transitions. Further, fragmentation in our health care system frequently means that patients are not informed regarding the array of care choices that may be available to them and the respective consequences of each. It is frequently the case that even when patients have made deliberate decisions about their care preferences and committed those to written documents that their choices are not honored.

What Congress Should Do:

Congress should support and encourage enactment of The Patient Choice and Quality Care Act introduced in the Senate by Senators Mark Warner (D-VA) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and in the House by Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Phil Roe, M.D. (R-TN), which would do the following:

- Create a Medicare advanced illness care and management model program under which an interdisciplinary team provides care coordination and palliative care services to test the use of targeted advanced illness management and early use of palliative care;
- Facilitate the development and use of quality measures applicable to advanced illness, palliative, and end-of-life care;
- Permit qualified clinical social workers to provide advance care planning services under Part B;
- Provide access to advance care planning support tools;
- Promote the portability of advance directives;
- Require Medicare providers and entities to document plans made during a stay of care;
- Promote public awareness and training to support advance care planning; and
- Establish an Advisory Council to advise the Secretary on issues of advanced and terminal illness.