

Support the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act

H.R. 647/S. 2080

BACKGROUND

Several factors – including a growing senior population, increased interest in and use of hospice care, a growing number of palliative care programs nationwide, and growing use of advance care planning – are fueling the nation’s need for appropriately-trained hospice and palliative care professionals.

Palliative care is an approach to care that utilizes an interdisciplinary model and aims to optimize quality of life and mitigate suffering among individuals with serious, complex illness. According to the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, over the next 20 years the demand for palliative care will grow by more than 20 percent, while over the same time the palliative physician workforce will grow by only 1 percent. This falls far short of the projected growing needs of the rapidly aging population and does not address the growing need for similarly trained non-physician professionals, including palliative nurses.

Studies indicate that patients receiving earlier (rather than later) exposure to palliative care had:

- Lower rates of inpatient admissions in the last 30 days of life (33 percent vs. 66 percent)
- Lower rates of ICU use in the last month of life (5 percent vs. 20 percent)
- Fewer emergency department visits in the last month of life (34 percent vs. 39 percent)
- A lower rate of inpatient death (15 percent vs. 34 percent)
- Fewer deaths within three days of hospital discharge (16 percent vs. 39 percent)
- Lower 30-day mortality rates post hospital admission (33 percent vs. 66 percent)

During 2019, Reps. Elliott Engel (D-NY) and Tom Reed (R-NY) introduced **H.R. 647** (The Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act – PCHETA) to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs (including physician assistant education programs) to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine. PCHETA was passed by the House of Representatives on October 28, 2019. Companion legislation was introduced by Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) as **S. 2080**. Both bills enjoy widespread, bipartisan support.

Members of the U.S. Senate are urged to support passage of PCHETA during 2020.

This Legislation Would:

- Amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs (including physician assistant education programs).
- Promote education and research in palliative care and hospice and support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.



For More Information: Contact NAHC Government Affairs at 202-547-7424