

May 5, 2014

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Congressman Blumenauer:

The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) writes to reiterate its support for your legislation, the Personalize Your Care Act of 2013 (H.R. 1173). We also wish to convey our appreciation for your continued leadership in ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries have consistent access to patient-centered end of life care.

SHM represents the nation's more than 44,000 hospitalists who work primarily in acute care hospitals, as well as increasingly in post-acute care facilities. They specialize in the care for hospitalized patients, which include a large number of Medicare beneficiaries. Hospitalists are critical team leaders for coordinating care, often being highly involved in the end of life care for patients. They are at the front lines of these conversations, often being asked to help patients plan for their end of life care needs and then ensuring that the system is set up to meet those needs. Many of their patients are acutely ill and often face these critical decisions in real time.

The legislation would authorize Medicare payments for *voluntary* end of life care consultations every five years or at changes in health, health-related condition, or care setting of the patient. This creates regular opportunities for patients to express their care wishes in a structured and supported way and ensure that those wishes are respected. It is critical that patients are able to make fully-informed decisions about their care, particularly during advanced stages of illness. The legislation places emphasis on providing access to the information necessary for patients to engage in informed decision-making and, ultimately, respecting the patient's care preferences.

H.R. 1173 works to ensure that patients are able to discuss and convey their end of life plan with the full expectation that their wishes will be honored and respected throughout the spectrum of the healthcare system. Advance care planning that is patient centered and driven solely by the patient's informed choices is critical for a healthcare system that encourages patients to be active participants in their care.

We greatly appreciate your leadership and commitment to improving the end of life care for Medicare beneficiaries. SHM looks forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Burke T. Kealey, MD, SFHM
President, Society of Hospital Medicine