

June 7, 2022

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
709 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

1001 Connecticut Ave, NW  
Suite 522  
Washington, DC 20036  
800 247 7421 [phone](tel:8002477421)  
[CompassionAndChoices.org](http://CompassionAndChoices.org)

RE: Endorsement of Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA/S. 4260)

Dear Senators Baldwin and Capito,

Compassion & Choices is pleased to support the *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act* (PCHETA/S. 4620). By investing in research, public education and training, PCHETA will expand awareness of and access to high-quality care for Americans suffering from serious or terminal illness. If this legislation becomes law, patients with life-limiting illnesses will receive better healthcare, experience an improved quality of life and be able to access a more peaceful death.

During the pandemic, we saw firsthand the devastating impact that the shortage of palliative care professionals had on the quality of healthcare for seriously ill patients. In the face of overwhelming surges of patients with COVID-19, hospitals simply did not have enough palliative care professionals to care for their patients. Tens of thousands of people likely suffered and died without the emotional, physical and psychosocial care they so desperately needed. Their loved ones were also deprived of the extra layer of support offered through palliative care, which often relieves stress on the family.

Every day, 10,000 Americans turn 65. In the next few decades, [the number of older adults will double](#) — exceeding 88 million people — comprising over 20% of the U.S. population by 2050. This rapid aging progression means that the number of people developing serious, chronic and life-limiting conditions will also skyrocket, exponentially increasing the demand for palliative and hospice care services. According to a [Duke University report](#) published in

2019 *before the pandemic*, unless policy change alleviates the situation, the United States soon will face drastic workforce shortages in the field of palliative care. The study calls for the implementation of policies that support high-value, team-based palliative care through expansion in all segments of the specialty palliative care workforce.

PCHETA is designed to accomplish this urgent need. This legislation addresses the existing and growing palliative care shortage by expanding the numbers of healthcare professionals with appropriate training and skills. It supports the expansion of research into this relatively new field to improve clinical practice and care delivery for patients with serious or life-threatening conditions. It also establishes educational campaigns to inform patients, families and health professionals about the benefits of palliative care to ensure that more people suffering from serious or terminal illness will take advantage of this invaluable healthcare service.

It is universally agreed that palliative care improves the quality of care that a patient receives by focusing on strategies to alleviate the symptoms and treating the whole body. However, palliative care also offers a secondary, but still important, benefit: It reduces the cost of end-of-life care. For example, one study shows that [the addition of a palliative care consultation shortly after a hospital admission significantly reduces costs for the management of serious illnesses](#). As the baby boomers are aging, the Medicare and Medicaid budgets are experiencing unsustainable growth. Investing in palliative care is an important strategy to contain healthcare costs including Medicare and Medicaid expenditures.

For more than 40 years, Compassion & Choices has sought to empower individuals to make informed decisions about their end-of-life healthcare options that are consistent with their values, faith and personal preferences. As the oldest and largest organization dedicated to improving and expanding care at the end of life, we are encouraged by the support PCHETA has received from a wide variety of organizations, including the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and Alzheimer's Association, as well as dozens of other patient advocacy groups.

We are also grateful for your continued leadership on this issue, and hopeful that, as it has previously, the House of Representatives will follow suit and ensure swift passage of PCHETA on a bipartisan basis. Compassion & Choices is prepared to provide expert testimony, collaborate with your offices on educational briefings or media opportunities, and meet with members of Congress to secure more co-sponsors for PCHETA. We welcome the opportunity to be a resource to ensure passage of this bill. If we can be of assistance, please contact Anthony Hinojosa, Director of Federal Affairs, at [ahinojosa@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:ahinojosa@compassionandchoices.org) or at 202.868.7128.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Callinan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Callinan  
President/Chief Executive Officer  
Compassion & Choices