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Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA) Introduced in Congress
Alzheimer’s Association and Alzheimer’s Impact Movement Support Critical Legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 22, 2017 – The Alzheimer’s Association and the Alzheimer’s Impact Movement (AIM) support the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA). Reintroduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Representative Tom Reed (R-NY). PCHETA would ensure an adequate, well-trained palliative care workforce through workforce training, education and awareness, and enhanced research. In addition, the legislation is consistent with recommendations made by the Advisory Council on Alzheimer’s Care, Research and Services.

“Palliative and hospice care are important services for people living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias. The availability of palliative and hospice care is growing, but the need is growing faster – and the quality of the care remains a concern,” said Robert Egge, Alzheimer’s Association chief public policy officer and AIM Executive Director. “This legislation would increase the availability and quality of care.”

“I was raised by my maternal grandparents and later served as my grandmother’s primary caretaker as she grew older, so this issue is personal to me, and I want to make a difference for families experiencing serious health concerns,” said Senator Baldwin. “I’m proud to work across party lines and introduce the bipartisan Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act with my colleague Senator Capito. We must do more to help grow and sustain our health care workforce to safeguard and improve the quality of care for the growing number of patients with serious or life-threatening illnesses.”

Palliative and hospice care can improve both the quality of care and quality of life for those with advanced dementia. A recent study shows that nursing home residents with dementia who receive palliative care at the end of life, compared with those who do not receive such care, are up to 15 times less likely to die in a hospital, nearly 2.5 times less likely to have a hospitalization in the last 30 days of life, and up to 4.6 times less likely to have an emergency room visit in the last week of life. Individuals with advanced dementia who are enrolled in hospice have a lower rate of dying in the hospital, a lower rate of hospitalization in the last 30 days of life, and better symptom management. Additionally, nearly half of all people with dementia die in hospice care.

“As someone who has cared for aging parents, I understand how important palliative and hospice care is and how much support and comfort it provides to patients and their families. I feel strongly we must strengthen training and education options to those involved in these fields so we can continue delivering quality care for those in the final stages of life. That is why I am joining with my colleague
Senator Baldwin to introduce this legislation that will help so many facing serious illnesses,” said Senator Capito.

Today, there are an estimated 5.5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s. At a cost of $259 billion in 2017 – $175 billion of which come in direct costs to Medicare and Medicaid – it is the most expensive disease in America. What’s more it is the only leading cause of death that cannot be prevented, slowed or cured. By mid-century, the number of people with the disease is set to nearly triple, and the cost of Alzheimer’s disease are projected to more than quadruple to $1.1 trillion.

“Now, more than ever, we need to look for new and innovative ways to expand care options for those in need. Despite the benefits of palliative care, many Americans aren’t aware of the supports available to them. There is also a shortage of educated providers who can offer quality palliative care. The Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act aims to remedy these issues,” said Congressman Engel.

“Every one of us has been touched by serious illness. Whether we have been affected personally, or stood by a loved one grappling with critical illness, we all know how physically and emotionally trying such situations can be for all those involved. I hope that PCHETA will bring us one step closer to relieving the stresses of illness and extraordinarily improving patients’ quality of life.”

“I know first-hand from experience that the hardest thing we all eventually must face is the decline and end of life of our loved ones. Because of the choice my mother made, which had a profound effect on me and my family, I feel very strongly about improving the reach and benefits of palliative and hospice care,” said Congressman Reed. “I am committed to accomplishing this legislation because of its potential to improve the quality and delivery of care as well as furthering research that can provide education and awareness. It’s so important that we support this worthy cause to improve services that can positively impact people’s lives at the most difficult time.”

“Through the leadership of Reps. Engel and Reed and Sens. Baldwin and Capito, PCHETA will help ensure that the millions of Americans living with Alzheimer’s have access to quality care and end of life services, making a devastating diagnosis slightly more manageable,” said Egge.

Alzheimer’s Association
The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s. For more information, visit alz.org.

Alzheimer’s Impact Movement
The Alzheimer’s Impact Movement (AIM) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization working in strategic partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association. AIM advocates for policies to overcome Alzheimer’s disease, including increased investment in research, improved care and support, and development of approaches to reduce the risk of developing dementia. For more information, visit www.alzimpact.org.

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