



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

July 10, 2013

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Blumenauer:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), representing over 110,600 physicians and medical students nationwide, I am pleased to inform you that the AAFP supports the *Personalize Your Care Act* (HR 1173) and I commend you on your leadership in developing and introducing this important legislation.

This legislation would provide coverage under Medicare and Medicaid for voluntary consultations between doctors and patients to discuss advance care plans. These plans specify the care that a person wishes to have if he or she becomes unable to make medical decisions and usually includes a living will, durable power of attorney for health care and a "Do Not Resuscitate" order. The bill would also provide grants to states to create or expand programs that assist with advance care planning.

The AAFP feels strongly that care at the end of life should embody the following principles:

1. Respect the dignity of both patient and caregivers.
2. Be sensitive to and respectful of the patient's and family's wishes.
3. Use the most appropriate measures that are consistent with patient and surrogate choices.
4. Ensure that alleviation of pain and management of other physical symptoms are a high priority.
5. Recognize, assess, and address the associated psychological, social, spiritual and religious issues and cultural taboos realizing that different cultures may require significantly different approaches.
6. Ensure appropriate continuity of care by the patient's family physician and consulting physician when applicable.
7. Advocate for the patient's right to choose any therapy that may reasonably be expected to improve the patient's quality of life, including alternative or nontraditional treatments.
8. Provide access to palliative care and hospice care.
9. Respect the right to refuse treatment.
10. Respect the physician's professional judgment and recommendations, with consideration for both patient and family preferences.
11. Consider clinical and evidence-based research and education relative to providing care at the end of life.

The AAFP strongly agrees that physicians and patients should develop together a plan that recognizes the patient's views and treatment preferences for the last months of life. Your bill would allow Medicare and Medicaid to cover a Voluntary Advance Care Planning Consultation to review and discuss these

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complicated and sensitive matters. The AAFP applauds these provisions and looks forward to working with you to advance H.R. 1173. Please let Debbie Weiner, AAFP Government Relations Representative (dweiner@aafp.org), know how we can be of assistance with your work on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen Stream MD". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Glen R. Stream, MD, MBI, FAAFP
Board Chair