

Senators Tammy Baldwin and Shelley Moore Capito Introduce  
Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act

Bipartisan legislation to grow, improve and sustain the palliative care and hospice workforce to keep pace with patients' needs and help improve the well-being of Americans with life-threatening illnesses and their families.

Palliative care is interdisciplinary, patient- and family-centered health care for people with serious illnesses. It focuses on providing relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness, whatever the diagnosis. Its goal is to relieve suffering and improve quality of life for both patients and their families/caregivers. Palliative care entails support from an interprofessional team of doctors, nurses, social workers, physician assistants, chaplains, and other specialists who work with a patient's other providers to provide an extra layer of support, including assistance with difficult medical decision making and coordination of care across multiple settings. Palliative care is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and it can be provided along with curative treatment.

A growing body of medical research has documented the benefits of high-quality palliative and hospice care for patients and families, hospitals and payers, and the health care system as a whole. Palliative and hospice care have been associated with enhanced quality of life for patients, reduced hospital expenditures and lengths of stay, and other positive outcomes – including longer patient survival time.

Delivery of high-quality palliative and hospice care cannot take place without a sufficient number of health care professionals with appropriate training and skills. To help build a health care workforce more closely aligned with the nation's evolving health care needs and improve care and quality of life for millions of Americans facing serious illness, the **Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act** focuses on three key areas:

1. **Workforce Training:** Ensure we have education centers, curricula, and teachers to expand interdisciplinary training in palliative and hospice care and establish programs to attract and retain providers.
2. **Education and Awareness:** Share resources and information to ensure that patients, families and health professionals are informed about the benefits of palliative care and the services that are available to support patients with serious or life-threatening illness.
3. **Enhanced Research:** Direct NIH to use existing authorities and funds to expand palliative care research to advance clinical practice and improve care delivery for patients with serious or life-threatening illness.

As the population of individuals with serious illnesses or complex chronic conditions grows, the need for specialized care grows with it. And COVID-19 has only exacerbated this need. The public health emergency created by COVID-19 produced a sudden and unprecedented increase in the numbers of Americans with serious illness that has highlighted both the current palliative care and hospice workforce shortage as well as the importance of expanding the knowledge and skills of all health care providers who will be called upon to care for the seriously ill. By establishing an infrastructure to educate and train all members of the interdisciplinary care team, PCHETA will help our nation meet current health workforce challenges as well as those of the future, including future pandemics.

To join us in affording patients and families facing serious or life-threatening illnesses greater access to the high-quality care and supports they deserve while confronting serious illness or at the end of life, please contact Erin Dugan (Baldwin) at [Erin\\_Dugan@baldwin.senate.gov](mailto:Erin_Dugan@baldwin.senate.gov), or Dana Richter (Capito) at [Dana\\_Richter@capito.senate.gov](mailto:Dana_Richter@capito.senate.gov).