



OUR MISSION:

To advocate, with one voice, for policies that ensure the best care for patients and families facing serious illness and the end of life.

 @hospiceaction

Dear Hospice & Palliative Care Advocate,

Thank you for your interest in speaking up for every American's right to access high quality hospice and palliative care services at the right time. Whether you are a seasoned advocate looking for the latest information, or a first-timer just getting your feet wet, we are delighted to have you join us!

The HAN Advocacy Toolkit is designed to be a year-round guide for your advocacy efforts. It can help you plan out your advocacy strategy and answer specific questions along the way. We hope you find it helpful, and encourage you to share it with others in your community.

By becoming an advocate, you are taking an active role in our participatory democracy. Lawmakers look to you, their constituents, for information and advice on what is wrong and how it can be fixed. We need advocates who have intimate knowledge of our healthcare system to help educate lawmakers and improve access to hospice and palliative care.

Join us, and tap into this dynamic and growing network! You'll receive our monthly email update, HAN Action Alerts about important legislation, and information about other developments in Washington, DC. You will gain access to all the resources on our website, and receive information about other free training opportunities throughout the year.

Over the last few years, our advocates have played pivotal roles in the creation of the Medicare Care Choices Model, establishment of Advance Care Planning Codes, improving the Notice of Election Process, rolling back proposed Medicare Part D changes, protecting patients and families by allowing the safe disposal of unused opioids by hospice professionals, and championing the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act. But there remains much still to do!

Thank you for standing up for hospice and palliative care during this important time of health system transformation across the nation. We look forward to working with you. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to the Hospice Action Network staff at info@nhpcohan.org.



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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Support the *Rural Access to Hospice Act*

When patients enroll in hospice, they select a physician or nurse practitioner to serve as their attending physician. The attending physician collaborates with the hospice in the development of the care plan, and is kept informed of the patient's care. Attending physicians are typically reimbursed for their services under Medicare Part B. However, Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are not reimbursed under Part B. As a result, these clinics, which serve over 27 million Americans in under-resourced and rural communities, cannot provide or be reimbursed for hospice attending physician services.

The *Rural Access to Hospice Act* addresses this issue by allowing beneficiaries to choose a physician or nurse practitioner employed by an RHC or FQHC to serve as their hospice attending physician.

Support the *Patient Choice and Quality Care Act*

Americans with serious and advanced illness often receive fragmented, uncoordinated care that increases their risk for repeat hospitalizations, adverse drug reactions, unnecessary emergency room visits, and unwanted, ineffective care. Too often, individuals with advanced illness do not understand the conditions they face or their treatment options. Additionally, they often do not receive the information or support they need to evaluate treatment options in light of their personal values goals of care, or to document treatment plans in a manner that allows providers and facilities to follow the patient's treatment plans.

The *Patient Choice and Quality Care Act* will give these patients and their families access to the kind of information and services they need. This bipartisan legislation directs CMS to conduct an Advanced Illness Coordination Services demonstration, which will allow an interdisciplinary team to provide early palliative care and wrap-around, home-based services to individuals with multiple and complex chronic conditions.

Support the *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act*

Research from the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) indicates that there is a shortage of adequately trained hospice or palliative care providers. Moreover, the current rates of educating and training medical professionals in palliative care will not be sufficient to ensure that aging Americans will have access to quality palliative care.

The *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA)* establishes a variety of palliative care and hospice training programs that would increase the number of healthcare professionals trained in these techniques. The legislation also supports a national education campaign to increase awareness about palliative care, and supports research to improve delivery of palliative care.

HAN is also pursuing legislative action on the following broader issues:

- Structural Reforms to the Medicare Hospice Benefit
- Sustainable Payment Streams for Community-Based Palliative Care Services
- Broadening Access through Workforce Expansion and Education



How to be an Effective Advocate

Advocacy is, at its core, relationship building. Yes, you need to know about the issues facing our community, but you must also cultivate relationships with elected officials. Your goal is for that elected official, when they are faced with a question about hospice, to immediately think of and call YOU as a reliable resource for information on hospice and palliative care.

We recommend at least four (4) "Connections" with a Member of Congress per year. Two should be in person (e.g., hosting them at your program, attending a meeting in their office, or visiting with them in DC). Two can be remote, (e.g., a phone call, email, invitation to an event, etc.) The goal is to make sure the Member of Congress and their staff know you, know your organization, and trust you to give them good information. That doesn't mean you have to show up at their office every week, but it does mean you should show up more often than once a year.

You should also feel free to engage with them beyond a formal meeting. Are you members of the same gym? Do you see them at the grocery store? Certainly don't be intrusive, but also feel free to smile, say hi, and chat about things other than work, so they know you as a community member and neighbor as well as an advocate.

Using Social Media to Advocate

Most Members of Congress use social media to get an unfiltered look at what their constituents care about. This can be good and bad: a good advocate can help raise the profile of their issues and get the Member's attention; a bad advocate can leave a negative impression on a Member. If you are going to use social media to advocate, make sure you are careful about what else you are posting. Keep your pictures work appropriate, and stay away from any abusive or foul language. Try to be positive, thanking the Member for attending an event or supporting a bill, and avoid accusatory or negative language. If you must be negative, be respectful. For example, "I was disappointed that Congressman Smith did not support our bill. I hope he will reconsider, as hospice and palliative care are very important to our community."

If a Member attends an event or supports a bill, definitely thank them on social media and include a picture. Members love to be praised, and it reinforces to them that ours is a good, supportive community to be involved with. Please share Hospice Action Network blog posts and Action Alerts via social media, either with friends or Members of Congress. Many of our Action Alerts have optional pre-written tweets you can use, or copy and use on Facebook. Remember to tag Members of Congress and @HospiceAction in your posts.

FIVE FIRST STEPS

Kick off your advocacy adventure by completing this checklist today!



01

ONE

Sign up as a Hospice Advocate on our website: hospiceaction-network.org/join-us and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)



02

TWO

Find Out Who Represents You in Congress: hospiceaction-network.org



03

THREE

Follow your Members of Congress on Social Media, visit their website, and sign up for their newsletter



04

FOUR

Complete our current [Action Alerts](#)



05

FIVE

Share our [Action Alerts](#) on [Social Media](#)

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Now that we've covered the basics, check out our additional resources:

- ▶ Check out our latest Congressional Overview [Video](#): Get a deeper look into what we're working on
- 📄 More Details on [Our Legislative Priorities](#)
- ▶ Check out this [Video Series](#) from Congress.gov for a greater understanding of the legislative process
- 📄 Advocacy [Webinar Schedule](#): Free training for our Advocates
- ▶ Congressional Management Foundation [Video](#):
Citizen-Centric Advocacy: The Untapped Power of Constituent Engagement
- ▶ Congressional Management Foundation [Video](#):
Advocacy Storytelling: Winning the Hearts, Minds, and VOTES of Lawmakers
- 📄 Building a Culture of Advocacy [Webinar Recording](#)

OK, WHAT'S NEXT?

So you've read all our materials, completed your Five First Steps, and Done Your Homework. What's next? Here are a few ideas on how to take your advocacy to the next level:

Send a Letter to the Editor of your local paper (You can do that through our Action Alert system)

Introduce yourself and your program to your Member of Congress with our Introductory Letter Template

Drop by the local office to introduce yourself and leave our One-Page Issue Briefs

Invite your Member of Congress to attend an event or visit your program

Schedule a meeting with a staffer at the local office

Attend a local Town Hall Meeting

Attend the Leadership and Advocacy Conference or schedule your own meeting in DC

THE HOSPICE ACTION NETWORK

Fighting for Patients and Families

The Hospice Action Network brings together the legislative and policy expertise of a professional government relations staff headquartered in Washington, DC, with tens of thousands of grassroots hospice and palliative care advocates across the country. HAN advocates on behalf of hospice and palliative care providers at the federal level: in front of Congress, and regulatory bodies like the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Our goal is to identify, develop, and implement policy strategies that support hospice and palliative care providers, patients, and their families, and improve serious illness and end-of-life care for all Americans.

HAN provides training and resources to empower hospice and palliative care advocates to take action at the local, state, and federal levels. HAN empowers our advocates to engage at all levels of the legislative process. This creates a strong and vibrant community of activists prepared to protect and expand access to quality serious illness and end-of-life care.

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Please feel free to reach out to us at info@nhpcohan.org with any questions!