

U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Capito: Introduce bill to strengthen palliative and hospice care workforce

Posted on Tuesday, Jul 11, 2023

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) introduced the *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act* (PCHETA), bipartisan legislation to bolster the palliative care and hospice workforce and meet the growing need for care by investing in training, education, and research.

“Having served as my grandmother’s primary caregiver, I know the difference quality palliative and hospice care can make for a loved one who is battling a serious illness,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “Our bipartisan Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act will make an overdue investment in education and research to ensure doctors, nurses, and health care professionals have the tools they need as they work tirelessly to keep patients with serious or life-threatening illnesses comfortable and safe. This legislation will help more Americans get the training they need to provide palliative care, help strengthen our health care workforce, and also ensure those with serious illness get the care they deserve.”

“The need for high quality palliative and hospice care services—which are vital for patients and their families—continues to grow, making passage of our bill needed now more than ever,” **said Senator Capito.** “As a caregiver for parents that suffered from Alzheimer’s disease, I saw firsthand just how valuable these services can be. In order to preserve access to this care, our bill would strengthen training and education opportunities for individuals working in these fields. I look forward to working with Senator Baldwin and my colleagues in the Senate to pass this legislation.”

Palliative and hospice care focus on relieving patients' suffering from serious illnesses and working to improve their quality of life. Medical research shows that palliative and hospice care have been associated with enhanced quality of life for patients, reduced hospital expenditures and lengths of stay, and longer patient survival time.

In 2001, just 7% of U.S. hospitals with more than 50 beds had a palliative care program, compared with 72% in 2019. Yet, not all these programs have in place the interdisciplinary team necessary to provide comprehensive, high-quality palliative care. Currently, one-third of palliative care clinicians are burned out and [40% are 56 years of age](#) or older. The shortage of palliative and hospice providers will only continue to increase unless workforce investments are made. At the same time, a growing number of Americans are living with serious or complex chronic illnesses, leading to greater demands for caregivers. Within the decade, the U.S. will [have more people over the age of 65](#), a group highest at risk for cancer and serious illness, than under the age of 18.

Senators Baldwin and Capito's PCHETA will help ensure we have the workforce to adequately treat patients and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans facing serious illness by focusing on three key areas:

- **Workforce Training** – Supports the training of interdisciplinary health professionals, including physicians, nurses, social workers, physician assistants, chaplains, and others in palliative care; supports the training and retraining of faculty; and provides students with clinical training in appropriate sites of care.
- **Education and Awareness** – Shares research and information with patients, families, and health professionals about the benefits of palliative care and the services that are available to support patients with serious or life-threatening illnesses.
- **Enhanced Research** – Directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to use existing authorities and funds to expand palliative care research to advance clinical practice and improve care delivery for patients with a serious or life-threatening illness.

In addition to Senators Baldwin and Capito, the bipartisan legislation is also co-sponsored by Senators Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Mike Rounds (R-SD), Jack Reed (D-RI), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), John Boozman (R-AR), Roger Marshall

(R-KS), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), and Angus King (I-ME).

PCHETA is supported by over 90 national and state organizations. For a full list of supporting organizations and to hear what they are saying, click [here](#).

“As we face a critical shortage of health professionals with expert knowledge and skills in palliative care, AAHPM applauds Senators Baldwin and Capito for their leadership in introducing the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act to ensure all patients facing serious illness or at the end of life can receive high-quality care,” **said Holly Yang, MD MSHPEd HMDC FACP FAAHPM, President of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.** “We urge Congress to recognize the importance of a well-trained, interprofessional healthcare team to providing coordinated, person-centered serious illness care and to act now to build a healthcare workforce more closely aligned with America’s evolving healthcare needs – including future pandemics. Advancing PCHETA will go a long way towards improving quality of care and quality of life for our nation’s sickest and most vulnerable patients, along with their families and caregivers.”

“Palliative care is critical for supporting patients and their families dealing with serious illness so that they can live in accordance with their inherent dignity and worth. Palliative care ensures people are treated with respect, love and support while serving the goal of improving quality of life for both the patient and the family. The Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act makes a critical contribution to ensuring that patients and their families are provided the life-affirming support and dignity they deserve,” **said Sister Mary Haddad, RSM, President and CEO of the Catholic Health Association of the United States.**

“Palliative care treats the whole person, not just the disease. Ensuring health care providers can be trained in this specialized, coordinated form of care and providing funding for robust public education through the Palliative Care Education and Training Act can help increase access to palliative care for cancer patients and make their cancer journey less difficult,” **said Lisa A. Lacasse, President of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.** “We commend Sens. Baldwin and Capito for their leadership and steadfast commitment to palliative care and to improving quality of life for patients, including those impacted by cancer.”

A one-pager for this legislation is available [here](#). Full text of this legislation is available [here](#).



An online version of this release is available [here](#).