



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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June 5, 2017

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
United States Senate
131 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Warner and Isakson:

On behalf of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians and osteopathic medical students we represent, thank you for introducing the “Patient Choice and Quality Care Act of 2017.” This important bipartisan legislation will help empower patients and their families by ensuring they have greater access to the patient-centered care and treatment they need and deserve, especially with regard to end-of-life decisions and advance care planning.

As osteopathic physicians, we are trained in a whole-person, patient-centered approach to care that takes into account a patient’s physical, mental, emotional, and psychosocial needs throughout the duration of their treatment. Too often, patients and their families do not prepare for an unexpected incident or condition to arise, and when this occurs they may not be able to make clear decisions about their medical treatment, or may not be aware of what treatment options are available. Advance directives and care planning services give patients confidence that they will be given the best treatment and their wishes will be honored by their family and providers if something unexpected happens and they are unable to make medical decisions.

Your legislation will ensure that American patients have greater access to advanced care planning services and will help increase awareness of these important services. Through the establishment of an Advanced Illness and Care Management Model under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), Medicare patients would be able to participate in a team-based model of care that meets their individual goals of care, values, and preferences. The bill also spurs the development of new quality measures related to end-of-life care to ensure that these services are appropriately reflected in other Medicare payment models, including Medicare Advantage and Alternative Payment Models (APMs). Importantly, your legislation also seeks to strengthen the overall advanced care planning infrastructure, whether through grants to increase public awareness of advance care planning and advanced illness care, clarifying and improving existing policies regarding these services, and ensuring that providers and patients alike have the information and support they need.

Again, thank you for introducing this important bipartisan legislation to improve the care and well-being of our patients. The AOA and our members stand ready to assist you in securing its enactment into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boyd R. Buser" followed by a circular stamp or mark.

Boyd R. Buser, DO
President