



September 20, 2017

The Honorable Christopher Coons
U.S. Senate
127A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
U.S. Senate
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
U.S. Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
U.S. Senate
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Coons, Cassidy, Bennet and Barrasso,

The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) writes in support of S. 1530, the Medicare Choices Empowerment and Protection Act. We also wish to convey our appreciation for your leadership in ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries are aware of and have access to patient-centered end of life care.

SHM represents the nation's more than 50,000 hospitalists who work primarily in acute care hospitals, as well as increasingly in post-acute care facilities. Specializing in the care for hospitalized patients, hospitalists admit more Medicare beneficiaries to the hospital than any other medical specialty. They are critical team leaders for coordinating care, often being highly involved in the end of life care for patients. Hospitalists are at the front lines of these conversations, often being asked to help patients plan for their end of life care needs and then ensuring that the system is set up to meet those needs. Many of their patients are acutely ill and often face these critical decisions in real time.

This important piece of legislation aims to incentivize Medicare beneficiaries to take control of their end of life care decisions by offering an incentive payment for filing an advance directive outlining the treatments desired. This payment will raise patient awareness of the need and importance of being proactive in making advance care plans. Advance care planning that is patient centered, driven by the patient's informed choices, and that makes patients active participants in their care is critical for a high functioning healthcare system. By encouraging beneficiaries to make these decisions, hospitalists and other providers will be able to provide care with greater certainty and efficacy.

We greatly appreciate your leadership and commitment to raising awareness and improving the end of life care for Medicare beneficiaries. SHM looks forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ron Greeno, MD, FCCP, MHM
President, Society of Hospital Medicine

