

Dear Editor,

I am writing to support the Advance Care Planning Consult Provision proposed in the House health care reform bill.

There has been a great deal of misunderstanding and misinformation about a provision in the bill (Section 1233 of the health care reform legislation “Advance Care Planning Consultation”). Some believe it will restrict care for individuals determined to be in the final stage of life. Its actual purpose is to gain an understanding of a patient’s wishes so their caregivers can treat them accordingly. Under the provision, a patient’s caregivers would consult with the patient and his or family to determine their preferred course of treatment and present options in their course of care. One objective is to ensure that those making decisions for their loved ones during highly stressful circumstances will feel more secure in their understanding of what their loved one wants. Such an understanding can go a long way toward alleviating some of the emotional pain that often accompanies those difficult decisions. The cost of the consultation would be covered by Medicare.

It is very important for all Americans – especially members of Congress – to understand that this provision seeks to ensure a patient’s desires are given top priority throughout the continuum of their care. It is critical that all hospice and end-of-life care bills contain provisions that are supportive of patient choice and the holistic, patient-centered care provided by hospices, and this bill does. I strongly believe that the Advance Care Planning Consultation Provision will help bring patients and their families comfort and the level of care they desire, and urge those who share that opinion to contact their legislators to make them aware of their support for the bill.

Name

Title

City, State