



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
INTERNAL MEDICINE | *Doctors for Adults*®

June 27, 2013

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Blumenauer:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians, I am writing to express our appreciation for your leadership and efforts in addressing advance care planning between doctors and their patients, both now and in past Congresses. We are supportive of your legislation, H.R. 1173, the Personalize Your Care Act of 2013, but would also like to suggest some modifications for improvement.

ACP members include 133,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

This legislation would provide coverage under Medicare for voluntary consultations between doctors and patients to discuss advance care plans. It would also provide grants to states and communities to create or expand programs that assist with advance care planning. ACP recognizes that physicians should routinely raise the issue of end of life care planning with competent adult patients during outpatient visits and encourage them to discuss their values and preferences with their surrogates and family members. Physicians and patients should develop a plan that recognizes the patient's views and treatment preferences for their last months and years of life. ACP supports greater recognition of the importance of adequate Medicare reimbursement for extended and complex counseling required for physicians to develop end of life care plans for their patients. This legislation will advance these goals supported by ACP to improve end of life patient care.

H.R. 1173 also requires that certified electronic health records provide for the display of current advance directives and physician orders for life sustaining treatment. We have concerns that electronic health records may not have the most current information regarding patient's directives for advance care planning. Patients often make multiple changes in their advanced care directives during the final stages of life and consult with their families to ensure that their wishes are executed. We ask that you amend this section to require that electronic medical records designate the physical or network location of the authoritative and verified end of life care plan. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to improve this section of the legislation.

We look forward to working with you to advance H.R. 1173 and hope you will consider modifying this legislation to include our recommendations concerning electronic health records. We appreciate your sustained commitment to improving end of life care.

Sincerely,

Molly Cooke, MD, FACP
President