



**\*\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\*\***

For Immediate Release  
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Contact: [press@baldwin.senate.gov](mailto:press@baldwin.senate.gov)  
202-224-6225

**Baldwin, Clarke Call for Investments in the Palliative Care and Hospice Workforce**

*The Members Requested Baldwin’s Bipartisan Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act Be Included in the Reconciliation Package*

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin and Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke sent a letter to Congressional leadership requesting that the upcoming reconciliation package include investments in the palliative care and hospice workforce to keep pace with patient need and to help improve the well-being of Americans with serious illnesses and their families.

“Palliative care and hospice care focus on relieving and preventing patients’ suffering and improving their quality of life. This interprofessional team-based approach focuses on the patients’ needs, explains treatment options and gives patients and their families a voice in realizing their treatment goals, and serves as a critical component of high quality, coordinated, person-centered care,” **wrote the Members.**

“Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for quality palliative and hospice care has only grown more pronounced. Hospitals have treated thousands of seriously-ill patients under extremely stressful circumstances, and patients and their families have faced incredibly difficult decisions, often without the necessary guidance or expertise of a palliative care team,” **the Members continued.**

“Now is the time to address the needs of patients facing serious illness and their families. To ensure

access to palliative and hospice care for those who need it, we must support an interprofessional, team-based approach to care, and make the needed investments in the palliative care and hospice workforce,” **the Members concluded.**

“As COVID-19 continues to spotlight the critical shortage of health professionals with knowledge and skills in palliative care, the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) echoes the request by Sen. Baldwin and Rep. Clarke to include the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act in the reconciliation legislation,” **said President of AAHPM, Nathan E. Goldstein.** “We urge Congress to recognize the importance of a well-trained, interprofessional healthcare team to ensuring high-quality, 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.”

“PCHETA is a top priority of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) and we strongly believe it will help address the current gap in trained palliative care professionals, including those caring for patients with cancer” **said ONS President, Nancy Houlihan.** “ONS applauds Senator Baldwin and Representative Clarke for urging that the upcoming reconciliation package invest in a well-trained palliative care workforce to meet the needs of caring for patients with serious illness, including cancer.”

“The National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care praises Senator Baldwin and Rep. Clarke for their steadfast leadership in introducing the Palliative Care Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA) and working now to incorporate these provisions in the Congressional reconciliation package,” **said Executive Director of the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care, Amy Melnick.** “Senator Baldwin and Rep. Clarke recognize that as a nation we can do better to improve the equitable access and quality of palliative care for all those who need it. Patients and families deserve these necessary services that improve quality of life and reduces the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. Enhancing awareness of palliative care, training more doctors, nurses, social workers and spiritual care providers, and dedicating more research activities to improving the care of people with serious illness will avoid needless suffering.”

“Palliative care provides a critical added layer of support for people living with serious illness,” **said CEO of the Center to Advance Palliative Care, Brynn Bowman.** “By meeting patients and families where they are, educating them on what to expect, and effectively managing symptoms and distress, it has been shown to improve quality of care, quality of life, and patient outcomes. Patients and families deserve palliative care – but analysis projects that will be a shortfall of up to 18,000 palliative care physicians by 2030 if nothing is done. Therefore, federal investment in the palliative care workforce is critical ensure that this care is available to everyone who needs it. We applaud Senator Baldwin and Congresswoman Clarke’s leadership and commitment to all Americans living with serious illness, and support their request to address this issue in the reconciliation.”

“The Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA) is very grateful for the efforts of Senator Baldwin and Congresswoman Clarke to grow, improve and sustain the palliative care and hospice workforce,” **said Chief Executive Officer of the HPNA, Virginia Marshall.** “Now more than ever, it is important for Congressional leadership to address this issue in reconciliation legislation because the pandemic has magnified the hospice and palliative care workforce challenges. The most important need at this time is to support and train the providers we need at the bedside to deliver care to patients and families dealing with serious illness.”

“The pandemic has illuminated the importance of palliative care for those experiencing serious illness and its lasting effects, including those with cancer and survivors, and has similarly exposed the scarcity of these critical services due to existing palliative care workforce shortages,” **said President of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Lisa Lacasse.** “We applaud Senator Baldwin and

Representative Clarke for their efforts to incorporate policies that ensure access to palliative and hospice care in the reconciliation package, and call on Congress to act on this request without delay.”

Senator Baldwin has been leading the effort in the Senate to expand access to palliative and hospice care since 2016. In the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, Baldwin led the introduction of the bipartisan Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA) which would increase the availability and quality of care by establishing palliative care and hospice workforce training programs, creating a national education and awareness campaign about the benefits of palliative care and available services and supports, and enhancing research on improving the delivery of palliative care.

Baldwin was raised by her maternal grandparents and later served as her grandmother’s primary caretaker as she grew older.

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#) and below.

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the shortfalls in our health care system, including the need for improved access to, and understanding of, palliative and hospice care. We write to request that efforts to grow, improve and sustain the palliative care and hospice workforce to keep pace with patient need and to help improve the well-being of Americans with serious illnesses and their families be included in the upcoming reconciliation package.

Palliative care and hospice care focus on relieving and preventing patients’ suffering and improving their quality of life. This interprofessional team-based approach focuses on the patients’ needs, explains treatment options and gives patients and their families a voice in realizing their treatment goals, and serves as a critical component of high quality, coordinated, person-centered care. Over the last decade, the number of hospital-based palliative care programs has quickly increased, but the number of providers available to fulfill the needs of these patients has not kept pace. Furthermore, many patients and care providers are not aware of the benefits and options for palliative and hospice care.

Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for quality palliative and hospice care has only grown more pronounced. Hospitals have treated thousands of seriously-ill patients under extremely stressful circumstances, and patients and their families have faced incredibly difficult decisions, often without the necessary guidance or expertise of a palliative care team.

Now is the time to address the needs of patients facing serious illness and their families. To ensure access to palliative and hospice care for those who need it, we must support an interprofessional, team-based approach to care, and make the needed investments in the palliative care and hospice workforce. These investments must include efforts to address workforce development; health care provider training, including for physicians, nurses, and other health professionals; enhanced research; academic and career incentive awards; and increased education and awareness. The bipartisan Palliative Care and

Hospice Education and Training Act, introduced in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress (S.2080/H.R. 647), should be used as a model for our efforts.

We look forward to working together to respond to this critical need. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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

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