

July 17, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
United State Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Benjamin Cardin
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Collins and Cardin:

Thank you for introducing the bipartisan *Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act of 2019* (S.296). We, the undersigned groups, pledge our continued support of your efforts to obtain passage of this important legislation in the 116th Congress. As you are well aware, this legislation would give nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse midwives, and physician assistants (PAs) the authority to certify home health care services for Medicare patients. This important modification and modernization would increase access to important home health care services, and potentially prevent additional hospital, sub-acute care facility and nursing home admissions—all of which potentially expose the patient to additional health concerns and are costly to the consumer, the taxpayer and Medicare.

The undersigned organizations remain committed to ensuring that consumers have access to health care providers who are qualified, educated, and certified to provide high quality primary care, chronic care management, and other services that keep them living a high quality life, with dignity, in locations of their choice.

Although current law has long recognized advanced practice registered nurses and PAs as authorized Medicare providers, and allows these clinicians to certify eligibility for nursing home care for their patients, it precludes these same practitioners from certifying patient eligibility for home health care services. This is an unnecessary barrier to care and adds at least one more step in the process of accessing home health care services by requiring the provider to find a physician to certify eligibility. In addition, time delays to locate a physician to certify eligibility, particularly in rural and underserved areas, can result in an extended hospital stay or nursing home admission because the beneficiary could not be moved back to or remain at home without home health care services.

There are decades of data supporting the ability of these providers to deliver high quality care to people of all ages, including Medicare recipients with multiple chronic conditions. Advanced practice registered nurses and PAs are often the only care providers in health professional shortage areas such as urban, rural, and frontier regions. Given the existing and future increased numbers of Medicare eligible patients, the need will be even greater for all qualified providers to be allowed to certify home health care eligibility.

The *Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act of 2019* would help to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries in need of home health care services whose providers are nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse-midwives, and PAs would be able to directly access home health care by referral from their providers. S.296 would provide beneficiaries with more direct access to care and increase the likelihood that they would experience better health and a higher quality of life.

We appreciate your continued leadership and are committed to working with you to ensure that this bipartisan legislation is passed and placed on the President's desk for signature during this Congress. Now is the time to ensure that patients have timely access to the quality, cost effective care they need. For any questions, please contact governmentaffairs@aanp.org or 703-740-2529.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

AARP

AFT Nurses and Health Professionals

AMDA- The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

American Academy of Nursing

American Academy of PAs

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Heart Failure Nurses

American Association of Nurse Practitioners

American Association of Occupational Health Nurses

American College of Nurse-Midwives

American Geriatrics Society

American Nephrology Nurses Association

American Nurses Association

American Organization for Nursing Leadership

American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association

American Psychiatric Nurses Association

Association of Community Health Nursing Educators

Association of Public Health Nurses

Association of Rehabilitation Nurses

Center for Medicare Advocacy

ElevatingHOME

Gerontological Advance Practice Nurses Association

International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

The Jewish Federations of North America

Justice in Aging

Leading Age

Medicare Rights Center

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

National Association for Home Care & Hospice

National Association for Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists

National Association of Neonatal Nurses

National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Black Nurses Association
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Council on Aging
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Public Health Nursing Section, American Public Health Association
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement

cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable John Thune
The Honorable John Barrasso
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
The Honorable Richard Durbin
The Honorable Patty Murray
Senate Finance Committee members