



# Advance Care Planning Talking Points

**The Advance Care Planning provision (section 1233) in the House's health care reform bill is about making YOUR choices known, and having the necessary tools to share those wishes. A great deal of misinformation has been voiced causing confusion among the public. Here are some talking points based on analysis of section 1233 from NHPCO.**

**The consultation provision gives patients information that will help them make their own informed decisions about their care:**

- ◆ It covers the broad spectrum of care and options when facing a life-limiting illness;
- ◆ The consultation is with a physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner—and in many cases may be the same health care professional the Medicare beneficiary has been seeing for years.
- ◆ Research has shown that patient discussions with their physicians results in a higher quality of life for patients and family caregivers.

**This consultation would be voluntary, it is not required:**

- ◆ It would be reimbursable under Medicare, just like other Medicare consultations.
- ◆ Beneficiaries could elect to have the consultation once every 5 years or when they face an important health situation.

**Discussing advance care planning before a Medicare beneficiary finds him or herself in a medical crisis will help ensure the patient gets the care that he or she wants.**

- ◆ One of the most frequent comments from family caregivers that hospice providers hear is “Why didn't we know about this sooner?” Hospice is just one option that would be discussed in an advance care planning consultation but this would ensure patients and family caregivers knew about it earlier.

**The provision has bi-partisan support in Congress.**

- ◆ Additionally, the 1991 Patient Self-determination Act already allows for advance care planning and stresses the importance of the patient's wishes—so this isn't necessarily new, it would now be more readily available to Medicare beneficiaries.

**What the advance care planning consultation is NOT about...**

- ◆ It's not about limiting care;
- ◆ It's not about hastening death;
- ◆ It's not about having choices made for the patient; and
- ◆ It's not about saving money.

**This provision exists to ensure American have the tools to make their wishes known and to assist health care providers in honoring these wishes.**

## What is Advance Care Planning: Here is some helpful background information.

**Advance care planning does involve...**

- ◆ Understanding your possible future healthcare choices.
- ◆ Thinking about your choices in light of what is important to you and your values.
- ◆ Talking about your decisions with loved ones and your doctors.
- ◆ Writing down your plans in Advance Directives so they will be ready if needed.

**It's important to remember that...**

- ◆ Your plans and advance directives can be changed as your situation or wishes change.
- ◆ Advance care planning is done over time and not a single conversation.
- ◆ Decisions like these are best considered before there is a health crisis – and changes to your plans can be made at any time.
- ◆ Planning ahead for your healthcare – now, while you are able to – is a gift you can give to yourself and to those you love.