



COALITION MEMBERS

American Academy of Hospice
and Palliative Medicine
(AAHPM)

Association of
Professional Chaplains
(APC)

Center to Advance
Palliative Care
(CACP)

HealthCare
Chaplaincy Network™
(HCCN)

Hospice and Palliative
Nurses Association
(HPNA)

National Association for Home
Care & Hospice
(NAHC)

National Hospice and
Palliative Care Organization
(NHPCO)

National Palliative
Care Research Center
(NPCRC)

Physician Assistants in Hospice
and Palliative Medicine
(PAHPM)

Social Work Hospice &
Palliative Care Network
(SWHPN)

Society of Pain & Palliative
Care Pharmacists
(SPPCP)

Supportive Care Coalition
(SCC)

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care (Coalition), we write to urge swift passage in the Senate of H.R. 6201, the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**. The Coalition represents the 12 leading professional organizations dedicated to advancing the delivery of high-quality serious illness care to all who need it. The national organizations that form the Coalition represent more than 5,200 physicians, 1,000 physician assistants, 11,000 nurses, 5,000 chaplains and spiritual care providers, 8,000 social workers, researchers, and pharmacists, along with over 1,800 palliative care programs and 5,500 hospice programs and their related personnel, caring for millions of patients and families each year across the United States.

The outbreak of COVID-19 is impacting our work as hospice and palliative care providers, and we are committed to supporting people diagnosed with this disease while continuing our vital services to those with other serious illnesses. The following provisions in H.R. 6201 will be helpful in fulfilling our professional mission.

COVID-19 testing. We strongly appreciate the numerous provisions within the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to ensure that all Americans – irrespective of their insurance status – can receive diagnostic testing related to COVID-19, without any cost-sharing requirements. As the legislation acknowledges, for an effective public health response, testing for COVID-19 is critical, and it's best to reduce or eliminate any financial or other barriers to such critical testing.

Personal protective equipment. As providers who are working on the front lines of the pandemic, we strongly support provisions to help ensure continued access to personal protective equipment (PPE), including the provision to designate PPE as a covered countermeasure.

Telehealth. We strongly urge the Administration to utilize all its current statutory and regulatory authority to enhance the coverage of telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic, including virtual visits from hospice and palliative care clinicians to manage patient needs and fulfill any administrative face-to-face visit requirements. We appreciate the latest technical change included in this legislation to ensure that the recently enacted telehealth authority will appropriately allow new Medicare beneficiaries to have access to that critical program.

We appreciate your leadership and commitment to removing the barriers for patients who need access to testing and treatment and protecting the health and safety of the clinicians who serve them. We look forward to working with you toward passage of this important legislation. If the experts within our Coalition can be of service during this critical time in our nation's history, please do not hesitate to contact Coalition Executive Director, Amy Melnick at amym@nationalcoalitionhpc.org or 202-306-3590.

Members of the Coalition

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