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April 7, 2017

The Honorable Chris Collins  
United States House of Representatives  
1117 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky  
United States House of Representatives  
2367 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 205105

The Honorable Ron Kind  
United States House of Representatives  
1502 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pat Tiberi  
United States House of Representatives  
1203 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gregg Harper  
United States House of Representatives  
2227 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Trent Kelly  
United States House of Representatives  
1721 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Meehan  
United States House of Representatives  
2305 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Collins, Schakowsky, Kind, Tiberi, Harper, Kelly, and Meehan:

AARP is pleased to endorse the bipartisan Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act (H.R. 1825). Your bill recognizes and authorizes nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse-midwives and physician assistants as eligible health care professionals who can order home health services under Medicare. This needed change would improve access to important home health services, and potentially prevent the need for many hospital, sub-acute care facility, and nursing home admissions—all of which are costly to the consumer and the taxpayer.

AARP is committed to the idea that consumers should 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. Your bill would help ensure that Medicare beneficiaries in need of home health care services who access care from a nurse

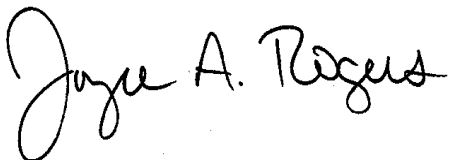
practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse midwife, or physician assistant are able to directly receive their referrals for home health care from their provider.

Although current law recognizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants as authorized Medicare providers, and allows these clinicians to order nursing home care for their patients, it precludes these same practitioners from ordering home health care services. This forces the provider to locate a physician to make the referral, an often difficult task in shortage areas such as rural regions. It creates a barrier to care for consumers that can result in extended hospital stays or unnecessary nursing home admissions. In addition, it can result in an inappropriate or inadequate referral if the physician has no previous knowledge of this person.

There are decades of data supporting the ability of nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and physician assistants to provide high quality care to people of all ages, including Medicare recipients with multiple chronic conditions. Sound evidence exists that clinical nurse specialists provide high quality chronic care management for consumers with multiple chronic conditions. These three types of advanced practice registered nurses are often the only care providers available in health professional shortage areas such as urban and rural regions.

AARP appreciates your bipartisan leadership in helping to improve home health care access for Medicare beneficiaries by allowing advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to order home health care services. We look forward to working with you on this and other issues important to older Americans. If you have any questions, please contact Rhonda Richards on our Government Affairs staff at (202) 434-3770 or at rrichards@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joyce A. Rogers  
Senior Vice President  
Government Affairs