



601 E Street, NW | Washington, DC 20049
202-434-2277 | 1-888-OUR-AARP | 1-888-687-2277 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org | twitter: @aarp | facebook.com/aarp | youtube.com/aarp

April 7, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Benjamin Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Collins and Cardin:

AARP is pleased to endorse the bipartisan Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act (S. 445). 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.

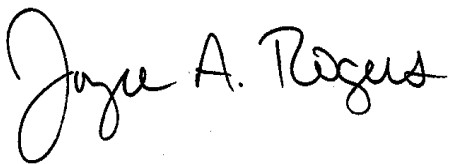
Although current law recognizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants as authorized Medicare providers, and allows these clinicians to order nursing home care for their patients, it precludes these same practitioners from ordering home health care services. This forces the provider 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