

June 15, 2011

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
U.S. House of Representatives
1502 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: American Geriatrics Society Endorsement of the Personalize Your Care Act of 2011 (HR 1589)

Dear Congressman Blumenauer:

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) supports your legislation, the Personalize Your Care Act of 2011. AGS is a national non-profit organization comprised of 6,000 health professionals, including physicians, nurses, researchers, medical educators, pharmacists, physician assistants, social workers, health care administrators, and others who specialize in geriatrics. We are the nation's largest multi-disciplinary health professional organization dedicated to improving the health, independence and quality of life of older people through initiatives in clinical practice, research and professional and public education.

The AGS believes that older Americans should have "voice and choice" in their health care. Your legislation will enable older patients to have frank and open discussions with their health care providers about their care needs and preferences over the near and longer-term. By providing Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries with coverage for voluntary and confidential consultations with their practitioner (a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) regarding advance care planning, the Personalize Your Care Act will help ensure that these conversations take place before a life-threatening illness or debilitating accident occurs. Geriatrics health professionals, with their focus on ensuring independence, function, and quality of life for older, frail patients, have a deep understanding and first-hand experience in the importance of embedding the patients' wishes in the care they provide.

AGS also supports the legislation's aim to make advance care planning documents accessible via a secure electronic health records system. These documents will be made available and respected and recognized by health providers across states, making this bill an important component of the patient-centered care that is the foundation of health reform.

Congressman Blumenauer, AGS appreciates your leadership on this important legislation and your efforts to improve quality of life for older Americans. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact the Personalize Your Care Act of 2011. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Alanna Goldstein, Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Advocacy, at agoldstein@americangeriatrics.org or 212-308-1414.

Sincerely,



Barbara Resnick, PhD, CRNP
President



Jennie Chin Hansen, RN, MS, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer