



October 15, 2015

The Honorable Tom Reed
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Reed and Thompson:

The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) would like to thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 2208, the **Hospice Commitment to Accurate and Relevant Encounters Act** (Hospice CARE). NACNS enthusiastically endorses the Hospice CARE Act, which addresses practical ways to ensure that hospices can continue to deliver high quality end-of-life care in a way that reflects the operational realities of programs.

To ensure that hospices can focus on patient care while balancing regulatory requirements, the bipartisan Hospice CARE Act (1) expands the types of hospice employed professionals who can have a face-to-face encounter to include clinical nurse specialists, (2) changes the reference to “the 180th day recertification” to “the first 60 day period” in order to make the statute consistent with CMS’s interpretation, and (3) allows hospices up to 7 days after the patient elects hospice to provide a face-to-face encounter in the limited circumstances of a hospice newly admitting a patient who requires a face-to-face encounter because of past hospice experience with a different hospice. These changes will ensure that patients are not denied timely access to hospice services, and that programs can prioritize quality care while remaining compliant.

The clinical nurse specialist (CNS) is one of the four advanced practice registered nurse roles. CNSs have unique and advanced level competencies that meet the increased needs of improving quality and reducing costs in the health care system. As the voice of more than 72,000 clinical nurse specialists, NACNS applauds your leadership on improving end-of-life care. We strongly support passage of this legislation, and look forward to working with you on this and future legislation that meets the need for all Americans to have access to quality end-of-life care.

If we can be of any assistance in the passage of H.R. 2208, please feel free to contact our Executive Director Melinda Mercer Ray at 703-929-8995 or via email at mray@nacns.org.

Sincerely yours,

Peggy Barksdale, MSN, RN, OCNS-C, CNS-BC
President