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## Federal Legislation

### Pending Legislation Promotes Advance Care Planning and Palliative Care Act

Senators Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Susan Collins (R-ME) have introduced comprehensive palliative care legislation. S 1150, *The Advance Planning and Compassionate Care Act of 2009*, is in the first step in the legislative process and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance. A companion bill is under development in the House.

Key objectives of the legislation include:

- Improving consumer information about advance care planning and end-of-life care.
- Improving provider education and training about advance care planning and end-of-life care.
- Requiring portability of advance directives from one state to another.
- Authorizing funding for states to develop electronic advance directive registries.
- Developing systems to identify a person's advance directive using driver's licenses.
- Providing reimbursement for advance care planning consultations, including POLST.
- Assuring access to concurrent curative and hospice care for children.
- Requiring the development of quality measures to assess end-of-life care.
- Establishing the National Center on Palliative and End-of-Life Care at the NIH.

This legislation is supported by the Center to Advance Palliative Care. Visit [www.capc.org](http://www.capc.org) to find out more, including how to get involved. Additional information is also available at [Pallimed](#): A Hospice & Palliative Medicine blog.

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### Introduced Legislation Expands Hospice

S 1251, *the Senior Navigation and Planning Act of 2009*, was introduced by Senator Mark Warner (D-VA). The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

Key objectives of the legislation include:

- Expanding Medicare's hospice benefits to include a "transitional care" benefit for terminally ill people expected to die within 18 months.
- Providing better education on living wills, counseling for dying patients and respite care for their families.
- Requiring doctors, beginning in 2014, to offer certain Medicare patients information about advance directives and other planning tools.

The [National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#) (NHPCO) supports this legislation.

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## Federal Pain Policy

### **FDA Threatens to Remove Long Acting Opioids Unless Benefits Outweigh Risks**

In February 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sent letters to manufacturers of opioid analgesics requiring them to develop a comprehensive Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) plan to ensure that the benefits of the drugs continue to outweigh the risks (misuse, abuse and accidental overdose).

The Hospice and Palliative Care Coalition – which includes American Academy of Hospice & Palliative Medicine, Hospice & Palliative Care Nurses Association, NHPCO, National Palliative Care Research Center – are concerned that if the REMS plan increases the regulatory burden on physicians and patients, it will negatively impact palliative and hospice patients.

The FDA is seeking input on the development of the REMS, and is accepting written or electronically submitted public comments until **June 30, 2009**.

For more information, visit the [CAPC web site](#).

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## Resources

### **NQF Issues Guidelines on Patient-Centered, Culturally-Appropriate Care**

The [National Quality Forum](#) (NQF) has endorsed 45 practices to guide health care systems in providing care that is culturally appropriate and patient-centered. The [practices](#) cover such issues as communication, community engagement and workforce training.

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### **Standards of Practice for Pediatric Palliative Care and Hospice**

NHPCO has developed a guide for hospice and palliative care programs to provide safe, quality pediatric care. For more information or to order, visit [NHPCO's Marketplace](#).

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## Announcements

### **Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance Launched**

The Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance (WPCA), a new global action network designed to focus exclusively on hospice and palliative care development worldwide, was launched on May 5, 2009. The WPCA is an alliance of national and regional hospice and palliative care organizations, bringing together people around the world with a shared vision of universal access to quality palliative care. Learn more about [WPCA online](#).

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### **CAPC Receives Award**

The Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) has received the American Hospital Association's (AHA) [Award of Honor](#). The award was given in recognition of its "outstanding contributions to improving the health status of communities and the nation. The award recognizes exemplary contributions to the health and well-being of people through leadership on major health policies or social initiatives."

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