



**Hospice & Palliative Care Association of NYS**  
24 Computer Drive W., Suite 104  
Albany, NY 12205  
Ph: 518-446-1483 ■ Fax: 518-446-1484  
[www.hpcanys.org](http://www.hpcanys.org)

**HPCANYS Issue Brief**  
**Advance Care Planning**  
**February 5, 2019**

New York State has a long-standing history of ensuring access to health care for all who reside in New York State. Key elements to ensuring this access include educating the public and involving them in their health care decisions. Governor Cuomo continued this commitment to access to healthcare in his 2018 State of the State when he stated the following to expand advanced care planning:

***Expand Advanced Care Planning:** Advanced Care Planning (ACP) not only empowers older adults to participate in the decision-making process of their treatment, but also details their wishes for care if they were unable to speak for themselves. Governor Cuomo will initiate a statewide ACP campaign, to include, public outreach and education, engagement and encouragement of New Yorkers of all ages to complete ACP documents and a re-design of the Department of Health's ACP website to include additional functionality and resources. The State will also fully participate in National Health Care Decision Day.*

Yet currently NY ranks 47 out of 50 states and District of Columbia for Medicare decedents who use hospice care at the time of their death. In NY, 29.9% of Medicare patients are on hospice at the time of their death compared to nearly 46.2% nationally.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, more needs to be done to address increasing access to hospice.

Hospice Organizations provide end of life care focused on comfort while treating the body, the mind and the soul. Hospice promotes patient engagement and choice, we have been empowering the patient and family since our very humble beginnings in the early 1980's. The basic tenant of hospice care is to have the patient lead the team, based on their personal goals and values and needs. Hospice does this so well that 84% of respondents in the federally published Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) surveys will say that they

recommend hospice care to others compared to 72% when asked the same question about hospitals.

Even though Hospice promotes quality and dignity during one’s final days, too few people in NY choose hospice care. There are many factors that contribute to this problem. Too few people know what hospice really is and how they or their families could benefit from this patient centered care. Socioeconomic and cultural factors impact on knowledge of and the ability to choose hospice care. Medical providers are still ill equipped to determine prognosis and to have the meaningful yet difficult conversations about end of life care. The impact can be measured in terms both financial and human perspectives. From the financial perspective, 28% of total Medicare spend is on the patients during the last 6 months of life. The human toll is greater with patients dying in pain leaving their families affected for years to come both financially and emotionally.

Research by the Massachusetts Coalition for Advanced Illness Care has shown that among the population who feel that their loved one’s wishes were honored at the end of life, 60% of the time, the family initiated the conversation and not the medical team.

In an effort to promote access to hospice care for all New Yorkers facing a terminal illness, we propose empowering the public with the knowledge of their choices, so that they can choose what is right *for them*. Public education on end of life care, hospice and the value of advance care planning will help many New Yorkers get the care they want.

**OUR ASK:**

The State of NY fund a public education campaign for **\$5 Million over the next 2 years.**

For more information, please contact

Carla Braveman HPCANYS <a href="mailto:cbraveman@hpcanys.org">cbraveman@hpcanys.org</a> 518-446-1483	JoAnn Smith Rivera Law <a href="mailto:jsmith@rivera.legal">jsmith@rivera.legal</a> (518) 533-2884	Sandra Rivera, Esq. Rivera Law <a href="mailto:srivera@rivera.legal">srivera@rivera.legal</a> (518) 533-2884
---	---	---

---

<sup>i</sup> These figures are taken from 2016 data, the most recent available