

## MEMORANDUM

**A.8880-A (Wallace)/S.8205-A (Hinchey)**

***An act to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to establishing a statewide advanced care planning campaign to promote public awareness of hospice and palliative care services***

LeadingAge New York strongly supports and urges the passage of A.8880-A (Wallace)/S.8205-A (Hinchey), which would establish a statewide advanced care planning (ACP) campaign to promote public awareness and education about advanced care planning tools and the benefits and availability of hospice and palliative care services.

ACP is widely recognized as a way to support patient self-determination, facilitate decision making, and promote better care at the end of life. Although often thought of primarily for terminally ill patients or those with chronic medical conditions, ACP is important for everyone, regardless of age or current health status. Planning in advance for decisions about care in the event of a life-threatening illness or injury gives individuals the opportunity to consider the values they want to have govern their care, to articulate the factors that are important to them for quality of life, and to make clear any preferences they have with respect to specific interventions. Importantly, these discussions also give individuals the opportunity to identify who they would want to make decisions for them should they not have decision-making capacity. This allows families to honor their loved one's wishes and not have to contend with such difficult decisions during an otherwise difficult time. Furthermore, it allows the individual a better quality of life during their last days.

A public education campaign would also ensure more equitable distribution of hospice and palliative care services, as there are currently alarming disparities in historically underserved populations in the utilization of hospice and palliative care. Public perception of hospice and palliative care in communities of color remains a roadblock to access, along with language barriers and culturally-based apprehension regarding the cessation of curative treatment.

Surprisingly, New York State has consistently ranked last in the nation in hospice and palliative care utilization metrics for over a decade. More sustained efforts must be made to reduce disparities in end-of-life care through efforts to better educate and promote the discussion of health care preferences. Every individual facing serious illness or caring for a loved one has a right to receive information about the services they are entitled to under Medicare, Medicaid, and most insurances. An inclusive and culturally-competent public awareness campaign would help close disparities in care and ensure all New Yorkers have access to critical end-of-life services.

**For these reasons, LeadingAge NY supports A.8880-A (Wallace)/S.8205-A (Hinchey) and urges that it be adopted.**

*LeadingAge New York represents over 400 not-for-profit and public long-term care providers, including nursing homes, home care agencies, senior housing, retirement communities, assisted living, adult care facilities, adult day health care and managed long term care.*