



February 24, 2015

ATTN: Senate Committee on Health Care

Chair Monnes-Anderson and members of the Committee,

On behalf of our 1,800 members in Oregon, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is proud to support SB 608 a bill that would improve coordination of care, facilitate sharing of best palliative care practices among medical professionals, and serve to educate both providers and the public on palliative care practice. NASW is the largest and most recognized membership organization of professional social workers in the world. As defined in our code of ethics, the primary mission of a social worker is to enhance human wellbeing and to ensure that basic human needs are provided to every member of our communities, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.

SB 608 aligns well with NASW's commitment to upholding the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. Recent research shows that although recognition of the values and benefits of palliative care measures are growing among both the medical community and the general public, misunderstanding of care approaches and use of practice exist in both populations (Carr et al., 2013), which is why SB 608 is so crucial and timely. Often, palliative care is equated with hospice, and while palliative care practices are certainly employed in hospice, palliative practices are also utilized during treatment for and recovery from serious health conditions.

SB 608 also exemplifies NASW's commitment to supporting self-determination. The bill aims to provide greater information for healthcare consumers regarding quality of life through treatment phases and into end of life. The bill would also create more coordination and education among providers, which gets pertinent information into the hands of those who need it most. Overall, this bill aligns well with social work values and would increase individual awareness, patient autonomy, and choice when facing grave illness or end of life planning.

After reviewing SB 608, the NASW Legislative Committee has concluded that the bill has the potential to positively impact healthcare consumers and professionals alike. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures are displayed on a light-colored background. From left to right: the first signature is "Jillian M. Szilagyi Kelly", the second is "Kaseja Wilder", and the third is "Kelly Skellenger".

Jillian M. Szilagyi Kelly, Kaseja Wilder, and Kelly Skellenger
MSW Candidates and NASW Legislative Committee Members – Oregon Chapter