



March 21, 2024

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Chairman  
Senate HELP Committee  
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Senate HELP Committee  
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Mike Braun  
United States Senator  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Kaine  
United States Senator  
231 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator  
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
United States Senator  
330 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, and Bipartisan Group of Colleagues Request for Information from Stakeholders on Older Americans Act Reauthorization**

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Dear Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, Senator Casey, Senator Braun, Senator Kaine, Senator Collins, Senator Markey, and Senator Mullin:

On behalf of The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (C-TAC) we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions' (the Committee) Request for Information (RFI) on policies the Committee should consider during the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA). Established in 2010, C-TAC is a nonprofit dedicated to advocating for patients, caregivers, and families impacted by serious illness. Recognizing the profound challenges they face, including disruption, isolation, and financial strain, C-TAC represents their interests and strives to promote person-centered care. With 200+ member organizations, C-TAC collaborates with key legislators and decision makers to shape policies that deliver more comprehensive, equitable, and consistently funded care.

Maintaining, strengthening, and modernizing the Older Americans Act is crucial to ensure that it continues to effectively meet the evolving needs of older adults, especially those who suffer from serious illness. The OAA, through its Aging Network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), State Units on Aging, and other community-based organizations, funds the delivery of a range of services and supports to older adults and their caregivers in every community across the country. Ensuring access to the social supports provided through the Aging Network is especially crucial for those older adults living with serious illness. The current OAA reauthorization process provides an important opportunity to improve the Aging Network's ability to serve those with serious illness, their families, and caregivers.



By increasing the capacity of the Aging Network to deliver these supports, particularly through programmatic innovations, the following recommendations are intended to strengthen the law, complement existing OAA provisions, and help ensure that the needs and preferences of older adults living with serious illness and their family caregivers are addressed.

Currently, the OAA does not include explicit definitions of advance care planning or serious illness. We urge the Committee to incorporate definitions of these terms and add them to the following existing definitions in the OAA: the definition of services provided by Aging and Disability Resource Centers, the definition of case management services, and the definition of information and assistance services.

The OAA requires each AAA and each state to develop a multi-year strategic plan for how they will provide certain services to older adults and evaluate those services. We recommend that the Committee change these planning requirements to include specific references to older individuals with serious illness and health care proxies.

We also ask the Committee to consider giving the HHS Secretary the following new responsibilities related to older Americans:

- Develop a strategy to ensure that information on identifying individuals with serious illness and informing the development of advance care plans is shared with AAAs and other service providers.
- Enhance awareness of care of serious illnesses (expanding an existing requirement to enhance awareness of long-term care); and
- Convene an advisory committee to develop a strategy to ensure older individuals with serious illness have access to quality, community-based services, and report findings to Congress.

Finally, we ask that the Committee consider creating a new grant program for AAAs and other aging-focused nonprofits to support initiatives related to serious illness and advance care planning. Specifically, these grants would support developing, enhancing, and expanding information and assistance, case management, and advance care planning services for older adults with serious illness and their family caregivers. The grants would also bolster coordination with existing Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Programs (GWEPs) and telehealth programs.

Overall, The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care supports the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions efforts to create bipartisan legislation which improves the efficiency and effectiveness of OAA services and programs. We kindly request that the Committee consider our proposed provisions aiming at providing additional support to older adults living with serious illness, as well as their caregivers and families. Thank you again for providing the opportunity for stakeholders to share insights and recommendations. C-TAC looks forward to working with the Committee toward enactment of innovative policy solutions. If you have any questions, please contact me at [jbroyles@thectac.org](mailto:jbroyles@thectac.org) or Brian Lindberg at 202-306-6126 / [brian@consumers.org](mailto:brian@consumers.org).

Sincerely,



Jon Broyles  
Chief Executive Officer, C-TAC