



Where Life Continues

July 10, 2019

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel  
16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
U.S. House of Representatives  
3655 Johnson Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10463

Dear Mr. Engel,

Thank you for all you do for your constituents in your congressional district, and for all United States citizens. Your record of support for such issues as universal health care, civil liberties, laborers, the environment, and many other issues is exemplary.

As someone who has been caring for people near the end of life for the past two decades, as a senior physician at Calvary Hospital, I am especially grateful for your leadership in introducing the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (H.R. 647). We are confident that passage of this bill will help get this medical specialty the national attention it deserves.

I would like to offer Calvary's good name, and our expertise in palliative and end-of-life care, as a resource for you to draw on as this bill makes its way through the legislative process. There is no question that Calvary is best known for our direct clinical care, and I can say that no other institution in the world has the depth and breadth of experience in palliative and end-of-life care as Calvary does.

Increasingly, Calvary is also becoming recognized as a center of education for palliative and end-of-life care. More than 1,000 clinicians, including every medical student in the New York metropolitan area and many practicing physicians, in our area and beyond, rotate through Calvary each year, for periods ranging from a day to several weeks. They come away with an understanding of the elements that comprise comprehensive palliative and end-of-life care. Our goal in providing this extensive education is to give physicians the tools they need to incorporate palliative care into their practices.

In addition, students in other fields, including nursing, social work, and bereavement counseling, rotate through Calvary for varying periods of time. For those interested in pastoral care, we offer an accredited Clinical Pastoral Education program, leading to a Board certificate in chaplaincy.

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Our clinical care and educational resources have drawn the attention of several academic institutions. Most recently, we are working toward establishing a formal relationship with Fordham University. This partnership will greatly increase our capacity to increase our educational programs, and also to pursue research focusing on palliative and end-of-life care across many disciplines – clinical fields, social work, ethics and theology, and more.

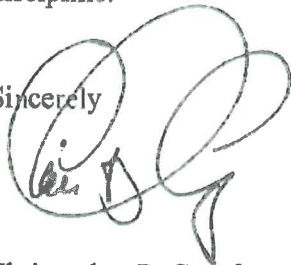
My colleagues and I fully support H.R. 647. We pledge to promote passage of this legislation and to advocate for it by urging our Board members and Professional Advisors Council to endorse it. We also will request support for it among our followers on social media.

Some of the ways we might help immediately are by providing: a) comments from clinicians who have experienced our care and teaching, and the impact we have had on their clinical care; b) concepts for curriculum and program development as this legislation gains ground and is implemented; and c) teaching models that use funding most effectively and efficiently.

We would welcome a meeting with you at any time, either at our Bronx campus, or in your offices in New York. I would be pleased to follow up with a phone conversation if you believe it would be helpful to your cause.

Again, thank you for the work you are doing, on behalf of all Americans, to make palliative care accessible to all who need it through legislation that promotes professional training in this vital discipline.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Comfort', written over a circular scribble.

Christopher P. Comfort  
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