

Jo Ann Constantino
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In my role as CEO of The Eddy, I see firsthand the benefits of hospice and palliative care services to the individual that we care for and about. I urge you to include the hospice benefit as an essential health benefit and to follow the guidelines as defined under the Medicare benefits. Recently, I have become responsible for the Community Hospice program here in the capital region and know that this benefit can mean so much to patients and their families and that if utilized early in a person's battle with a terminal illness, it can significantly improve the quality of their lives and positively impact cost of care. I also firmly believe that including palliative care within the category of chronic disease management is critically important. We know that the prevalence of serious chronic disease continues to grow and with that growth, there are multiple care complications and higher costs. The ability to help individuals and their caregivers manage a chronic disease is key to better health care delivery and bending the cost curve. Thanks you for your consideration of both within the definition of essential health benefits.