



HOUSE AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

Chairman Arndt
Vice Chair Pelanda
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Written testimony submitted by the Council On Older Persons (COOP)
Maria Foschia, Chair
Catherine Ciha, Vice Chair
Stacey O'Brien, Legislative Committee Chair

The Council on Older Persons (COOP) is in support of H.B. 286, Identify Need and Provide Support for Palliative Care. The Council on Older Persons is a standing committee of the Center for Community Solutions that has been in existence for over 70 years advocating for the needs of older adults in Cuyahoga County. Our members represent a wide range of professionals who serve our aging population.

The provisions of H.B. 286 call for the creation of a Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Council under the Department of Health and the creation of The Palliative Care Consumer and Professional Information and Education Program, both of which will offer needed resources and education to families and caregivers and are supported by the Council on Older Persons. The additional provision requires facilities to educate and offer resources to patients and families who meet the palliative care definition. These provisions increase the likelihood that patients and their families will understand the options available to them under palliative care and provide a greater opportunity to make informed decisions about their care.

Critical conversations about care and treatment at the end of life are often deferred until a crisis or are overlooked altogether. The Council on Older Persons supports the goals of H.B. 286 in increasing access to and information about palliative care, which may also serve to increase the likelihood of engaging in conversations about expectations for care and treatment. Discussing these important issues when a patient is seriously ill as opposed to in crisis or actively dying enhances the ability of patients and their families to receive education and information that may improve quality of life.

Increased life longevity results in many persons learning to age with and manage chronic disease. Quality of life may depend on the successful management of symptoms and side effects related to diseases and/or treatment. COOP supports increased access to the palliative care services and information provided through H.B. 286 with the expectation that these provisions will increase opportunities to improve quality of life for older persons.