



**In Re: Establishment of the Office of Hospice and
Palliative Care Access and Quality**
(Bill S.4007-B-Budget, Part DDD; Bill S.4858-Hinchey/A.5587 Wallace)

Memorandum of Support

Bill S.4007-B-Budget, Part DDD would establish a new Office of Hospice and Palliative Care Access and Quality within the New York State Department of Health.

The proposed Office of Hospice and Palliative Care Access and Quality (OHPCAQ) would make recommendations to improve the care of patients with serious illnesses, promote communication between hospice and palliative care providers and the Department of Health, eliminate barriers to hospice and palliative care access, monitor the utilization of end-of-life care and the quality of such care, promote advance care planning, and offer education on hospice and palliative care, among other tasks. Furthermore, the OHPCAQ would “ensure equitable access to hospice and palliative care services by underrepresented communities across New York state.” The OHPCAQ would also prepare annual reports regarding its activities to the governor of New York and legislative leaders.

Hospice and palliative care are important components of health care. Hospice and palliative care practitioners manage the symptoms of patients experiencing serious or terminal illnesses, and they help to keep those patients comfortable. According to *Crain’s New York Business*, the state of New York ranks last in the nation in hospice utilization.¹ The sponsor memorandum asserts that New York’s underutilization of hospice care “results in remarkably high hospitalization readmissions, creating additional burdens on New York State’s already overwhelmed hospital finances and resources.” The creation of a new office devoted exclusively to hospice and palliative care would improve access to these services, helping seriously ill New Yorkers and their families.

A prior version of this legislation was vetoed by Gov. Kathy Hochul in 2022 on the grounds that it was budget-related. Accordingly, New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms urges the Legislature to include Bill S.4007-B-Budget, Part DDD within the 2023-2024 state budget.

¹ See <https://www.craigslist.com/health-pulse/states-hospice-providers-lean-legislature-quest-boost-utilization>, last accessed May 24, 2022.