

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Legislation: Lawmakers Take Aim at Hospice's F2F Challenges

**If your hospice is like most, you don't have the time or money to lobby for F2F reform. But thanks to two lawmakers, you don't have to.**

Sens. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and **Pat Roberts** (R-Kan.) have introduced legislation that would amend "the requirements that all hospice patients meet face-to-face with a doctor before admission to a hospice, by allowing nurse practitioners and physician assistants and others to conduct the required face-to-face interview," according to a press release from Sen. Wyden's office.

The bill also would allow valid F2F encounters to occur up to seven days after admission in the third benefit period. The seven-day post-admission window would apply for new admits or other "exceptional circumstances," says S. 722 introduced April 4.

The F2F change "ensures program integrity while also preserving access to services, especially in rural areas where great distances can create unwanted impediments," Sen. Wyden said in introducing the bill.

The bill "sets realistic requirements for a face-to-face encounter," Wyden said. The current F2F rule "has caused a significant burden on our hospice communities, especially those in rural areas. The limits on who can conduct the face-to-face encounter and the timeline for compliance do not reflect the operational realities of hospice programs, especially for small and rural hospices."

The bill also calls for other hospice reforms, including requiring a demonstration project for payment reform ideas before implementing nationwide changes and requiring hospices to undergo surveys every three years.