

Senate Committee to Hear Successes of Local End-of-Life Care Initiatives

Patricia Bomba, M.D., of Pittsford, to testify before Congress on Wednesday, Sept. 24

Rochester, NY — Patricia Bomba, M.D., will testify before a U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging tomorrow on local efforts to ensure people's end-of-life wishes are followed.

Bomba, of Pittsford, will talk about the community collaboration behind a program piloted in Monroe and Onondaga counties that became state law on July 8 called Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST). Bomba will discuss other community-wide plans to improve end-of-life care, such as efforts to get more adults to complete traditional advance directives such as health care proxies and living wills.

"My goal is to not only convey our efforts to get people to complete advance directives, but how we're also emphasizing the importance of people having conversations with doctors and loved ones about their end-of-life wishes," said Bomba, vice president and medical director, geriatrics.

The hearing, "Honoring Final Wishes: How to Respect Americans' Choices at the End of Life," will examine issues such as barriers to higher rates of advance directive and medical proxy documentation. A 2008 study showed that nearly nine of 10 upstate New Yorkers said it's important to have a health care proxy, but only 42 percent have designated someone to ensure their end-of-life wishes are carried out. Still, the upstate New York rate was higher than the 30 percent range seen nationally. For more information on advance directives, go to <http://www.compassionandsupport.org>.

About MOLST

Seriously ill patients with advanced chronic illness and frailty, after talking to their doctor, complete the MOLST form about the kind of care they want at the end of their life. The MOLST form contains medical orders signed by their physician that are honored at all sites of care in the community. The MOLST form says whether the patient wants to be resuscitated or intubated and whether they want to be sent to the hospital or take medication, among other wishes.