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Sen. Casey Introduces Legislation to Expand PACE

*As President Proposes Increased Funding for HCBS and New Report
Recommends Expanding Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly*

WASHINGTON, DC – April 16, 2021 – Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) has introduced the PACE Plus Act (S. 1162), which seeks to expand access to Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE®). This key legislation from the chair of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging embodies a recommendation in his 2020 report on “Reimagining Aging in America” that Congress should bolster the development of additional PACE programs and expand eligibility of enrollment to allow for a greater number of people requiring in-home supports to be eligible to receive care in their homes and communities.

“The National PACE Association applauds Sen. Casey’s stalwart, visionary leadership,” said Shawn Bloom, president and CEO of the National PACE Association (NPA). “Given the rapidly rising numbers of aging Americans and their clear desire to age in place, it is imperative for our nation to encourage the growth of PACE – a holistic model of care that is well equipped to meet their needs at home and in the community.”

The bill comes as President Biden’s infrastructure proposal includes \$400 billion for home- and community-based services (HCBS) and the Milken Institute, a leading think tank, recommends PACE growth as a solution to the nation’s long-term care crisis. In addition, PACE was mentioned as part of the 10 percent increase in state matching funds for HCBS under the recently enacted American Rescue Plan.

PACE programs use a team approach to keep older Americans with long-term care needs healthy and cared for around the clock while living independently in their own homes. PACE enrollees typically receive care at home; utilize a PACE center for socializing, medication management and physician visits; are provided with transportation to the PACE center and other appointments; and receive other services needed to maintain their highest level of functioning.

Despite the pandemic, PACE programs have demonstrated the strength of their person-centered model of care by keeping enrollees safe at home. The rates of COVID-19 infection and death among PACE enrollees has been just one-third of those for nursing home residents.

The PACE Plus Act would bolster the PACE model of care in the following ways:

- facilitating the creation of new PACE programs and the expansion of existing programs through federal grants and providing states with incentives to adopt the model of care or increase the use of it;
- increasing the number of seniors and people with disabilities who are eligible to receive PACE services; and
- decreasing the bureaucratic burden experienced by growing PACE programs and providing additional technical assistance resources.

“Americans often underestimate the type and level of care they will need as they age, specifically the services and supports necessary to maintain the essential functions of daily life,” stated the Milken Institute in the report from its Financial Innovations Lab titled “New Approaches to Long-Term Care Access for Middle-Income Households.”

“Central to PACE and its unique value proposition are the interdisciplinary team caring for each patient and the wrap-around services provided,” stated the report, which outlined regulatory steps that could be taken to make PACE more accessible to middle-income families.

Bloom welcomed the legislation introduced by Sen. Casey and the recognition from private and public sectors, such as the Milken Report, that the PACE model is a solution. “We believe the PACE Plus Act, if enacted, will help many more Americans realize the potential of PACE to provide long-term care while keeping their loved one safely at home,” he said. “NPA looks forward to working with Sen. Casey and others to strengthen the long-term care delivery system in the future.”

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