

Government Rescinds Medicare Coverage of End-Of-Life Planning

**By Matthew Crider, JD
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Apparently the suspicion surrounding end-of-life planning is not as far in the past as we might have hoped. The recent Medicare regulation which would have allowed the government to pay doctors who advise patients on options for end-of-life care was rescinded only days after it was enacted.

Why such an abrupt turnaround? The reason is probably not too difficult to guess. Most people know that Medicare-covered end-of-life planning has a tempestuous history both in politics and in the media. This article in the New York Times stated that “while administration officials cited procedural reasons for changing the rule, it was clear that political concerns were also a factor.”

The alteration of the rule may be disappointing, but it shouldn't stop you from thinking—or talking to your doctor—about your choices for your own end-of-life care. After all, this administrative change of heart does not alter the fact that having these discussions with your doctor (as well as with your health care agent and loved ones) preserve patient autonomy at a time when events may seem to spiral out of control. As National Public Radio pointed out in their article, “it remains perfectly legal for physicians to talk with patients during annual visits paid for by Medicare about how much or little care they want when facing a terminal illness.”

Media firestorms and political debate notwithstanding, your decisions about your end-of-life care are important. When you have these discussions with your doctor and loved ones, and when you have a living will or healthcare directive in place, you are far more likely to get the care you want at the end of your life, regardless of how invasive or restrained you want that care to be.

If you have reservations about what a health care directive might mean to your future medical care, or if you have any questions about this issue, please don't hesitate to call our office. Your peace of mind is our first priority.

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About Matthew Crider, J.D.

Matthew Crider formed [Crider Law PC](#) in 1999 so he could help individuals and business owners by providing creative solutions and be their trusted advisor and legal counselor. He serves his clients by listening closely to their goals, dreams and concerns and working with them to develop superior and comprehensive estate and asset protection plans. His estate planning practice focuses on preserving and growing wealth by providing comprehensive, highly personalized estate planning counsel to couples, families, individuals and businesses.

