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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, A Duke Divinity School survey found that only 50% of African Americans have talked with family members about their end-of-life care, and 20% have never discussed end-of-life wishes with anyone; and

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WHEREAS, It is imperative to empower our vulnerable communities with information so they can make better decisions when planning for the end of life and have candid conversations with friends, family, faith leaders and medical providers about end-of-life care before a time of crisis; and

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WHEREAS, A 2016 study in the Journal of Palliative Medicine reported that only 24% of African Americans were likely to have completed advance directives, compared with 44% of their white peers; and

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WHEREAS, Advance healthcare directives are state-specific free legal documents created so an individual can choose medical treatment options in case one is unable to make decisions because of illness or infirmity and can appoint a healthcare proxy to speak on one's behalf; and

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WHEREAS, According to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Association, only 8% of hospice users are African

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1 American; hospice care is a health service that provides
2 comfort care to patients, in-home or at a facility, in their
3 final phase of illness or within six months of death; and

4 WHEREAS, Hospice care should be accessed as early as
5 possible as there is an emphasis on patient support and the
6 entire spectrum of improved quality of life; hospice staff and
7 caregivers provide holistic care rather than a curative
8 emphasis; and

9 WHEREAS, Palliative care is a compassionate
10 interdisciplinary approach between doctors, nurses, faith
11 leaders, and other medical professionals that provides
12 specialized medical and nursing care for people with chronic
13 and terminal illnesses; the ultimate goal is to improve the
14 quality of life for the patient and their support network by
15 focusing on providing pain relief and physical and mental
16 stress support at any stage of illness; and

17 WHEREAS, According to a 2016 study from the University of
18 Iowa and the University of California, African Americans are
19 significantly less likely to be prescribed opioids for back
20 pain and abdominal pain compared to white peers, and African
21 American patients are more likely to have their pain
22 underestimated and undertreated; and

1 WHEREAS, According to the National Center for Health, just
2 13% of African Americans have a living will in place compared
3 with 32% of whites, and African Americans are less likely to
4 purchase long-term care insurance, term life insurance, whole
5 life insurance, disability insurance, and homeowners insurance
6 or to complete estate planning; and

7 WHEREAS, Wills and trusts are vital components of estate
8 planning and should be considered in end-of-life discussions;
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10 WHEREAS, From the refusal of treatment to aggressive
11 treatment options, having an understanding of the entire
12 spectrum of care options is critical in order to make informed
13 healthcare decisions; and

14 WHEREAS, Being equipped with treatment-option information
15 and illness-specific questions for medical professionals
16 during appointments can empower our vulnerable communities to
17 advocate for themselves; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
19 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
20 we must be proactive in educating, empowering, and advocating
21 for those at the end of life; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That we encourage charting one's end-of-life
2 journey, consistent with one's own wishes and values, and
3 having those very important discussions with loved ones; and be
4 it further

5 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to enact legislation that
6 would encourage Medicare and Medicaid to take meaningful steps
7 toward identifying and educating vulnerable populations that
8 are nearing the end of life; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
10 delivered to the President of the United States, the Vice
11 President of the United States, members of the United States
12 House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and
13 other federal and state government officials and agencies as
14 appropriate.