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Media Contact:

Molly Homan

614.746.9914, mhoman@leadingageohio.org

LeadingAge Ohio Applauds Introduction, First Hearing of Hospice Integrity Legislation

COLUMBUS – As scrutiny of hospice programs increase nationwide, LeadingAge Ohio applauds the introduction of House Bill 945 sponsored by Representatives Andrea White (R-Kettering) and Bill Roemer (R-Richfield). House Bill 945 is driven by recommendations from the LeadingAge Ohio hospice membership on amending Ohio’s hospice licensure practices to prevent poor operators from entering the state while also increasing transparency and disclosure among existing programs.

“Ohio has 185 hospices, with one in four opening in the last five years – a 16.5% increase that is largely concentrated in urban areas,” states Rick Russell, Chair of the Hospice SubCommittee of LeadingAge Ohio and president/CEO of Hospice of Northwest Ohio. “Combined with other red flags, such as unusually high live discharge rates among some providers, we are increasingly concerned about faltering integrity of Ohio’s hospice programs and an exploitation of this sacred service that we must protect. This legislation is a necessary step to tighten regulations to protect both patient care and Ohio tax dollars.”

“Our members are rightfully concerned about bad actors entering Ohio and exploiting the hospice benefit for financial gain. That’s why our members are taking the lead and started sounding the alarm well before the recent anti-fraud initiatives released by Governor DeWine and CMS,” states Susan Wallace, president/CEO of LeadingAge Ohio. “This misconduct not only affects patients, and but also diverts Medicare and Medicaid resources from providers delivering appropriate care. Our approach is two-fold: strengthen regulations and enhance transparency so patients and their loved ones can make confident choices in hospice care. We are grateful

for Representative White and Roemer’s leadership in addressing hospice integrity and quality.”

The legislation would require reporting on certain quality metrics for relicensure. Currently, hospices may opt out of quality reporting and instead pay a fee issued by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS). The proposed legislation includes several other key provisions, such as:

- Increasing hospice license renewal frequency from every three years to annually
- Establishing a 12-month moratorium on new hospice providers
- Requiring verified office space with visible signage
- Limiting administrators and medical directors to serving one hospice organization, with exceptions in rural areas
- Strengthening oversight and accountability requirements for hospice ownership and leadership

LeadingAge Ohio is also asking the Ohio Department of Aging to add hospices to the state’s long-term care quality navigator – an award-winning online resource that helps consumers compare providers and make informed decisions.

In December 2025, Ohio was added to a list of six states in the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Service’s (CMS) Enhanced Oversight Program, which intensifies the monitoring of the state’s hospices. CMS has not publicly disclosed specific reasons for Ohio’s inclusion.

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About LeadingAge Ohio

LeadingAge Ohio is a nonprofit trade association representing 400 long-term care, hospice, and healthcare and housing organizations serving older Ohioans in more than 150 Ohio towns and cities. The continuum of care reflected by the member organizations serve an estimated 400,000 older Ohioans annually and employ more than 35,000 persons statewide.