



A PATIENT-CENTERED FORUM OF NATIONAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS ADDRESSING PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES IN CANCER

August 3, 2000

Nancy-Ann Min DeParle
Administrator, Health Care Financing Administration
Department Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Room 314-G – HHH Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Ms. DeParle:

It is with the greatest satisfaction that we congratulate you and your staff on a thoughtful and timely implementation of the President's directive on coverage of clinical trials. The National Coverage Decision recently posted on your agency's website adopts all the values that we, as patient advocates, have urged for years and then goes further still. Medicare beneficiaries diagnosed with cancer will now be assured that they will have access to all reasonable options for therapy, including treatment in a quality clinical trial.

Your decision on this important issue will make a difference not just for individual beneficiaries with cancer, but also for general progress against the disease. For too long the resistance of third-party payers to support for clinical research has hindered medical advances, nowhere more so than in cancer. Now, with your agency's recent decision implementing the President's Executive Memorandum, Medicare will stand as an example for all other insurers. Hopefully, in the future, all cancer patients will have access to treatment in clinical trials regardless of their insurance or socioeconomic status.

Your personal involvement and support will long be remembered by our community of cancer survivors, providers and researchers. Thank you so much.

Cancer Leadership Council

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support, and Education
American Cancer Society
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology & Oncology, Inc.
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Cancer Care, Inc.
Cancer Research Foundation of America
The Children's Cause, Inc.
Coalition of National Cancer Cooperative Groups
Colorectal Cancer Network
Cure For Lymphoma Foundation
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Prostate Cancer Coalition
North American Brain Tumor Coalition
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
US-TOO International, Inc.
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization

cc:

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton, President of the U.S.
The Honorable Albert Gore, Vice President of the U.S.
The Honorable Donna Shalala, Secretary, HHS
Ruth Kirschstein, M.D., Acting Director, NIH
Jane E. Henney, M.D., Commissioner, FDA
The Honorable Connie Mack
The Honorable John D. Rockefeller
The Honorable Nancy L. Johnson
The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
The Honorable Ken Bentsen