



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

February 7, 2000

The Honorable James M. Jeffords
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Jeffords and Lieberman:

The Cancer Leadership Council is a forum for advocacy and policy analysis with respect to issues that concern people with cancer and their caregivers. We have looked forward to announcement of the results of the General Accounting Office (GAO) report on the impact of health insurance coverage policies on participation in cancer clinical trials. Now that the report has been released, we would like to share our views with you concerning both the focus and the conclusions of the report.

As reflected in the enclosed briefing paper, we believe that the GAO report has confirmed a number of concerns about clinical trials coverage but that a number of issues remain unresolved. Specifically, as an organization of patient-led advocates for clinical cancer research and quality cancer care, we feel that the GAO report gives inadequate attention to the pressures exerted upon patients and physicians alike not to participate in clinical cancer trials because of the persistent threat of reimbursement denial. The GAO report was simply not structured to explore this important issue, and yet we believe it may be critical in the overall acceptance of treatment in clinical trials as part of the standard of care for cancer patients.

The GAO report is another piece of the accumulating data in support of including clinical trials participation as an essential aspect of quality care for people with cancer and other life-threatening diseases. We welcome the opportunity to work with you and members of each of your staffs to advance this important cause.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support and Education
American Cancer Society
American Society of Clinical Oncology
Cancer Care, Inc.
Cancer Research Foundation of America
Cure For Lymphoma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
Leukemia Society of America, Inc.
National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Patient Advocate Foundation
North American Brain Tumor Coalition
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
US-TOO International, Inc.
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization

Enclosure

cc:
Senator Christopher Dodd
Senator Bill Frist