

CANCER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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

November 18, 2009

Dear Senator:

The undersigned cancer organizations are writing to urge your immediate action on health care reform legislation. Cancer patients, health care providers, and researchers are united in saying that the time for action is now.

At a time when they most need access to quality health care, cancer patients often find they are not insurable, or that care is not affordable even if they are insured. Therefore, insurance reforms that will eliminate pre-existing condition limitations, protect against unreasonable out-of-pocket expenses, and remove annual and lifetime insurance limits are of utmost importance to cancer patients. These provisions must be elements of the reform package in order to make care available and affordable to cancer patients.

We also recommend: 1) the elimination of cost-sharing requirements for prevention and screening services, so that Americans experience no economic disincentives to utilizing these services, and 2) the assurance that care in a clinical trial will be considered routine patient care, a provision that assures access to quality care and protects the clinical research effort.

Finally, we urge that the reform package be patient-focused. This goal can be realized in part by establishing mechanisms for soliciting the advice of patient advocates and health professionals about benefit design and by reforming payment systems so that coordination of care and patient involvement in treatment decision-making are emphasized.

In order to meet the goal of enactment before year's end, we urge that the Senate act without delay. The work of the Finance and HELP Committees has brought the Senate to the brink of considering historic health reform legislation. Please act now.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
American Psychosocial Oncology Society
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Clinical Oncology
Breast Cancer Network of Strength

C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition
Cancer Care
The Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups
Education Network to Advance Cancer Clinical Trials (ENACCT)
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
Lance Armstrong Foundation
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Lymphoma Research Foundation
Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Lung Cancer Partnership
National Patient Advocate Foundation
North American Brain Tumor Coalition
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network
The Wellness Community