



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

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January 17, 2001

**Hand-Delivered**

The Honorable Tommy Thompson  
Secretary-Designate, Department of Health  
and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Governor Thompson:

As the transition process for your Administration goes forward, we want to introduce you and your new staff to the Cancer Leadership Council, a patient-oriented forum for national cancer advocacy. Our membership includes virtually every major nationwide organization dedicated to quality cancer care and continued research advances in cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment. We look forward to working with your Administration on a variety of issues that affect people with cancer, their families and their caregivers.

Among the issues of concern to our organizations is the review and approval of new drugs and other products by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). As the gatekeeper for the introduction and continued availability of potentially life-saving medical products, FDA is of critical importance to people with cancer and other serious and life-threatening diseases. It is for that reason that we want to bring to your attention an outstanding candidate for FDA Commissioner, Dr. Richard Pazdur.

Our enthusiasm for Dr. Pazdur is based not only on his impressive record as an academic cancer researcher but also on our substantial experience with him since he assumed the leadership of FDA's Oncology Drug Products Division approximately a year ago. In that relatively short period of time, Dr. Pazdur has distinguished himself in his willingness to engage in meaningful and productive dialogue with a wide range of patient, physician and even industry representatives. FDA has frequently been a lightning rod for criticism from practically the entire spectrum of interests affected by its regulatory reach, but we believe Dr. Pazdur has the personal and intellectual skills to undertake the challenging assignment of leading this often controversial agency. We are convinced that he would consider and respond sensitively and intelligently to the competing needs of the diverse constituencies who are subject to, or influenced by, FDA's exercise of its very broad jurisdiction.

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Enclosed is an abbreviated version of Dr. Pazdur's very lengthy and detailed curriculum vitae that we prepared in order to convey concisely his qualifications for the job of FDA Commissioner. We feel that Dr. Pazdur's qualifications meet or exceed those of any Commissioner during the past two decades or more.

With all the challenges it faces, FDA is in desperate need of leadership that commands the respect of patients, physicians, researchers and industry alike. If he were selected, Dr. Pazdur's experience as a well-known cancer researcher who has frequently collaborated with both the National Institutes of Health and private sector interests would make him uniquely qualified to lead FDA at a time when so many novel therapies are coming under the agency's scrutiny.

### **Cancer Leadership Council**

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support, and Education  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
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  
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network  
US TOO! International, Inc.  
The Wellness Community  
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization

Enclosure

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