



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

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June 12, 2001

The Honorable Olympia Snowe  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Rockefeller  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gordon Smith  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Snowe, Rockefeller, Feinstein and Smith:

The undersigned organizations representing cancer patient advocacy, provider and research organizations strongly support your efforts to achieve Medicare coverage for oral anti-cancer drugs through the Access to Cancer Therapies Act, S. 913. While we all recognize the need for comprehensive prescription drug coverage for seniors, S. 913 represents an important first step toward a broader benefit and addresses an immediate need for beneficiaries with cancer.

Most anti-cancer drugs are currently reimbursed by Medicare because they are administered through injection by a health care provider and covered as a benefit under Part B. As anti-cancer drug therapy is increasingly delivered in oral form, however, life-extending medications will not be covered by the program. Within recent weeks a new targeted therapy available only as an oral drug was approved by the Food and Drug Administration to great acclaim from the scientific and popular press, but it is not accessible for Medicare beneficiaries even though it is much more effective and much less toxic than current treatments.

S.913 would not only address that shortcoming as more new drug therapies are approved as oral agents, but would also cover widely used oral hormonal drugs for control of breast and prostate cancer. This relief for seniors with cancer is long overdue.

The Honorable Olympia Snowe, The Honorable John Rockefeller,  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, and The Honorable Gordon Smith  
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Limits on Medicare coverage should not be allowed to influence treatment decisions for beneficiaries facing life-threatening cancer. If enacted, S. 913 will help to ensure that such decisions are made on the basis of good science and medicine and the welfare of the patient, and not on considerations of cost. Your leadership as original co-sponsors of this important legislation is much appreciated by people with cancer, their families and their caregivers.

### 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, Inc.  
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  
Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation  
US TOO! International, Inc.  
The Wellness Community  
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization