



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

CLC HAILS INTRODUCTION OF ACCESS TO CANCER THERAPIES ACT

March 13, 2003. – The Cancer Leadership Council (CLC) today expressed enthusiastic support for legislation introduced by House Republican Conference Chair Deborah Pryce and Representatives Lois Capps, Steve Israel, and Sue Myrick to provide cutting edge cancer therapies to senior citizens. The Access to Cancer Therapies Act, introduced by the co-chairs of the House Cancer Caucus with strong bipartisan support, expands Medicare coverage to all oral anti-cancer therapies.

Medicare currently covers only injectable cancer therapies and a limited number of oral drugs that have an injectable equivalent. Many new cancer therapies are available only in oral form and therefore are not covered by Medicare. This limit in Medicare deprives cancer patients access to some of the most promising new therapies, including targeted therapies that often have fewer side effects than traditional chemotherapy.

The CLC commends the efforts of Representatives Pryce, Capps, Israel, and Myrick to correct the shortcomings of Medicare. The immediate beneficiaries of expanded Medicare coverage will be survivors of breast and prostate cancer, chronic myelogenous leukemia, gastrointestinal stromal tumor, and multiple myeloma, but many more cancer patients will benefit in the future. It is estimated that over the next decade as many as 25% of new cancer therapies will be available only in oral form, and enactment of the Access to Cancer Therapies Act will guarantee that the advantages of these drugs are enjoyed by senior citizens.

The Access to Cancer Therapies Act was supported by 328 Representatives and 57 Senators in the 107th Congress. The CLC urges prompt House and Senate action on this legislation in the 108th Congress.

CLC is a coalition of 29 organizations representing cancer patients, providers, and research institutions.

Cancer Leadership Council

Alliance for Lung Cancer	Lymphoma Research Foundation
American Cancer Society	Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation
American Society of Clinical Oncology	National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations (NABCO)
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology & Oncology, Inc.	National Childhood Cancer Foundation
Association of American Cancer Institutes	National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
Cancer Care	National Patient Advocate Foundation
Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation	National Prostate Cancer Coalition
The Children's Cause, Inc.	North American Brain Tumor Coalition
Coalition of National Cancer Cooperative Groups, Inc.	Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Colorectal Cancer Network	Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN)
International Myeloma Foundation	US TOO! International, Inc.
Kidney Cancer Association	The Wellness Community
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society	Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization