



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

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May 8, 2002

The Honorable Edward Kennedy  
The Honorable Jesse Helms  
The Honorable Louise McIntosh Slaughter  
The Honorable Connie A. Morella

Dear Senator/Representative:

The Cancer Leadership Council, representing cancer patient, provider and research organizations, is writing to express our strong support for S. 710/H.R. 5120. This important legislation would enhance access to quality cancer care by requiring health insurance policies to provide for appropriate colorectal cancer screening services.

Colorectal cancer is second only to lung cancer as a source of cancer mortality in the United States. The incidence of colorectal cancer is approaching 150,000 annually, with more than 50,000 deaths. The tragic irony of colorectal cancer is that it is highly detectable and eminently treatable if detected early, yet many people do not take advantage of available screening techniques that have been demonstrated to save lives. One important reason for this result is the lack of comprehensive screening coverage by private insurers, a shortcoming that will be addressed by your legislation.

The Medicare statute was amended in the last Congress to cover periodic colorectal screening, including the gold standard screening colonoscopy. S. 710/H.R. 5120 would make private health insurance coverage more consistent with current Medicare standards but would also leave decisions about methods and frequency of screening where it belongs, with the health care provider in consultation with the patient.

We commend you for your willingness to champion this important issue and look forward to working with you toward passage of S. 710/H.R. 5120.

#### Cancer Leadership Council

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support, and Education  
American Cancer Society  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology, Inc.  
Association of American Cancer Institutes  
Cancer Research Foundation of America  
Colorectal Cancer Network  
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  
The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation  
US TOO! International, Inc.  
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization

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