



CANCER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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

May 9, 2006

Dear Senator:

The undersigned organizations representing cancer patients, researchers, and caregivers are writing to express opposition to S.1955, the Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act of 2005, which will soon be considered by the Senate. This bill could have a serious impact on the quality of cancer care available to millions of Americans.

We understand the desire to improve the access of small business owners and their employees to affordable health insurance coverage, but this goal should not be achieved at the expense of high quality cancer care. Many states have enacted legislation to guarantee access to key components of cancer prevention, screening, and care, including screening for breast, cervical, colon, and prostate cancer; coverage of routine patient care costs in clinical trials; appropriate coverage of off-label uses of cancer drugs; smoking cessation services; and psychosocial services important to cancer patients.

The bill soon to be considered by the Senate may have the effect of denying these state protections not only to those insured through Small Business Health Plans, but also those in the large group and individual markets. Under the provisions of S. 1955, insurers that do not offer plans that are consistent with a state's benefit, service, and provider laws will be required only to offer an optional plan that is similar to a state employee plan in one of the five most populous states. This standard is inadequate to ensure access to appropriate cancer prevention, screening, and care.

The cancer community has been able to count on strong Congressional support for efforts to improve the quality of cancer care provided to Medicare beneficiaries. We hope we can count on you to provide those same protections to those who rely on private health coverage.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

American Psychosocial Oncology Society
American Society of Clinical Oncology
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition
Cancer Care
The Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups
Fertile Hope
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
Lance Armstrong Foundation

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
The Lung Cancer Alliance
Lymphoma Research Foundation
Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Prostate Cancer Coalition
North American Brain Tumor Coalition
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Sarcoma Foundation of America
The Wellness Community
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization