

CANCER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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

December 9, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

The undersigned organizations of the Cancer Leadership Council, representing cancer patients, researchers, and physicians, have identified the essential elements of a system of quality cancer care. The attached statement defines an essential health benefit (EHB) package for cancer patients.

We appreciate the significant challenges associated with defining a comprehensive benefit package while at the same time maintaining an affordable system of coverage. We commend the work of the Institute of Medicine Committee on Determination of Essential Benefits and its identification of the difficult task of balancing cost and coverage; success in achieving this balance is of critical importance to cancer survivors who struggle to afford coverage that is adequate for their medical needs.

Cancer research has yielded important advances in treatment, yet for many diagnosed with cancer, the treatment options are limited and inadequate. For some cancer patients, aggressive treatment may be successful and lead to a long period of survivorship during which late and long-term effects of treatment must be monitored and managed. For others, care at a distant cancer center or in a clinical trial may be the only care option. The diversity of the cancer experience and the fact that cancer is really hundreds of different diseases argue for a well defined benefit package for cancer patients. The EHB package must also include cost-sharing protections to ensure that treatment decisions are based on the best scientific and medical evidence and not influenced unreasonably by the individual patient's cost-sharing burden.

We appreciate the transparent manner in which the Department of Health and Human Services has conducted EHB listening sessions across the country to seek advice from diverse stakeholders. We are pleased to offer comments on an EHB package for cancer patients.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Clinical Oncology
Cancer Support Community
The Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups
Fight Colorectal Cancer
International Myeloma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
LIVESTRONG
Lymphoma Research Foundation
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Lung Cancer Partnership
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network