



May 21, 2020

Dear LCI Members,

As members of the South Carolina Coalition to Improve Access to Cancer Care, we represent various stakeholders who serve cancer patients across the great state of South Carolina. While the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, we are concerned about their lack of access to life-saving therapies.

As you develop a coronavirus response bill, we hope you consider including the *SC Cancer Treatment Fairness Act (H 4792)*. This bill could substantially help vulnerable cancer patients concerned about going to the hospital for their anticancer infusions. The bill addresses this by improving patient access to other forms of treatment. Cancer patients are uniquely at risk to contract COVID-19 due to their compromised immune systems. To help alleviate this burden, oncologists are reexamining the best ways to treat patients during this pandemic.

Members of the coalition have been in communication with oncology care medical professionals who are advising patients to stay at home as much as possible. When medically appropriate, some are transitioning these patients onto oral or self-administered anticancer drugs in order to achieve this goal. This further necessitates the need for the *SC Cancer Treatment Fairness Act*, which will ensure patients are paying out-of-pocket costs for oral anticancer treatments that are similar to the out-of-pocket costs for their IV therapies while remaining safe in their homes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further revealed a discrepancy patients face in their out-of-pocket costs for oral anticancer drugs in contrast to what they pay for IV therapies. As you may know, many cancer patients today are covered under antiquated insurance benefit designs which require patients to pay more out-of-pocket costs for anticancer treatments delivered by pill instead of IV. This discrepancy is simply based on the form of administration. Unfortunately, with COVID-19 this unnecessary discrepancy in cost-sharing means that many cancer patients face greater financial barriers to oral anticancer therapies. Simply put, this places patients and their families at risk of contracting COVID-19 and the *SC Cancer Treatment Fairness Act* would mitigate this risk.

Cancer patients who are able to stay safe at home will help flatten the curve and limit overwhelming their local health care system with additional complications should they contract COVID -19 or require care due to rapid cancer progression from lack of proper treatment.

We are very appreciative of your hard work during this COVID-19 pandemic to ensure South Carolinians are given all the necessary tools to survive and thrive during these unprecedented times. The cancer community stands ready to work with you to continue to move policy changes forward that will allow cancer patients to access lifesaving cancer treatment. Thank you in advance for considering the *SC Cancer Treatment Fairness Act* as part of the coronavirus response legislation.

For further questions about the need for this legislation, please contact Ray Wezik at rwezik@myeloma.org or Beth Johnson at beth.johnson@cancer.org.

Sincerely,



American Society of Hematology

