

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Alex Azar  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Re: Medicare Beneficiary Access to Transformative Therapies

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

Emerging therapies, including novel immunotherapies that utilize a patient's own immune system to attack cancer cells, are transforming how we think about cancer. Clinical trial data show that these innovative therapies can produce dramatic and lasting results in patients – including those who most need new and improved treatment options. We ask for your partnership to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries can access these transformative therapies.

Given the significant burden that cancer places on beneficiaries, their families, and the Medicare program, we are excited by the promise of chimeric antigen receptor T cell (CAR T-cell) therapy. While studies suggest that these therapies are disease-altering, the current inpatient Medicare reimbursement could threaten patient access to them. Many patients - due to poor health, comorbidities, or potential treatment side effects - will only be able to receive treatment in an inpatient setting, and a mechanism for appropriate payment for these therapies in the inpatient setting does not exist.

As a healthcare community, we are working diligently to ensure that patients and physicians are armed with the information they require to make informed treatment decisions and to delivering the next generation of cancer care safely and effectively. We are educating and engaging our communities about the promise of transformative CAR T-cell therapies and their impact on the treatment of hematologic malignancies. These are critical activities, but we will come up short for patients unless Medicare supports appropriate and timely access to care in the inpatient setting, as each patient's needs are unique. This will promote confidence among patients and establishes a clear path forward for providers, patients, and the Medicare program.

We urge CMS to act quickly and decisively to ensure timely and appropriate reimbursement for these transformative therapies. We are eager to work with CMS to implement solutions that will ensure that Medicare beneficiaries benefit from the innovation that defines the U.S. healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Dedicated Cancer Centers

Association of Community Cancer Centers

American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation

American Society of Hematology

CancerCare

Cancer Support Community

International Myeloma Foundation

Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

Lymphoma Research Foundation

Myeloma Crowd, a division of the CrowdCare Foundation

National Comprehensive Cancer Network