



SEPTEMBER 7, 2018

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

We respectfully seek your leadership on legislation you have previously supported that will dramatically improve Maine cancer patients' ability to access the medicines prescribed by physicians and nurse practitioners. S. 1566 was introduced by Senators Kirk (R-IL) and Franken (D-MN) during the last Congress. Due to Senator Kirk's departure, we respectfully seek your leadership to introduce similar legislation.

As you know, many cancer patients today are under antiquated insurance benefit designs which require patients to pay more out-of-pocket for cancer treatments delivered by pill instead of IV. This discrepancy does not exist due to any difference in cost between therapies but is simply based on the form of administration. Oral treatments are often more targeted and offer a higher quality of life for cancer patients and their families. Some patients have no alternative to oral treatments. Unfortunately, this unnecessary discrepancy in cost-sharing means that many patients face greater financial barriers to oral anticancer therapies, which impact treatment decisions and patient outcomes.

We represent patients, health care professionals, and other stakeholders across Maine and the United States who helped pass a law in 2014 to solve this problem for Maine residents whose health insurance is state-regulated. In fact, Maine and 42 other states have taken action to solve this disparity that puts cancer treatment at risk for many patients. While state laws like the one in Maine provide this important patient protection to people with state-regulated health coverage—approximately four out of every ten people covered by commercial insurance—the other six out of ten need Congress to make the same change for federally-regulated plans. Extending this policy would provide this vital protection to the 100 million Americans that are left unprotected by state laws.

The "Cancer Drug Parity Act" (H.R. 1409), which is led in the House of Representatives by Congressmen Lance (R-NJ) and Higgins (D-NY), currently has over 160 bipartisan co-sponsors, and support continues to grow. H.R. 1409 ensures that any health care plan currently covering cancer treatment provide patients with access to cancer medications taken by pill at a similar out-of-pocket cost as cancer medications administered by IV, port, or injection at a doctor's office. A similar bill was introduced last Congress in the Senate by Senators Kirk (R-IL) and Franken (D-MN) (S. 1566) and was

supported by you and 20 bipartisan co-sponsors. We believe with your leadership, there is an opportunity to build on this strong foundation of support to make a lasting difference for cancer patients.

The cancer community's work on this issue has demonstrated strong bipartisan support at the state and federal level to modernize insurance benefit designs to make a meaningful impact for cancer patients. Governors across the political divide—including Govs. Walker (WI), Scott (FL), Brown (CA), Perry (TX), Jindal (LA), Kasich (OH), McDonnell (VA), and Cuomo (NY), have all signed these laws in their states, and patients on state-regulated plans have seen dramatic improvements in their ability to access the cancer care prescribed by their physicians.

We are not alone in our support for this policy. In a recent poll of registered voters representing a diverse range of geographies and political ideologies, 70% surveyed said that they support the Cancer Drug Parity Act.

We would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss your potential leadership of this bill in the Senate and will follow-up with your staff. Should you or your staff wish to contact us directly, please contact Robin Levy of the International Myeloma Foundation at RLevy@myeloma.org.

Respectfully,

AIM at Melanoma

American Society of Hematology

Association of American Cancer Institutes

CancerCare

Cancer Support Community

Community Oncology Alliance

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered

Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association

International Myeloma Foundation

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Laura MacNeill

Executive Director for Maine, New Hampshire & Massachusetts

Northern New England Clinical Oncology Society (NNECOS)

Oncology Nursing Society

Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance

Susan G. Komen

Zero the End of Prostate Cancer

