



LATEST SENATE HEALTH BILL INCREASES COSTS FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Patients Would Struggle to Afford Lifesaving Treatment Under New Rules

Rye Brook, N.Y. (July 14, 2017) – The latest version of the Senate’s Better Care Reconciliation Act would require patients with costly medical conditions like cancer to pay higher premiums and shoulder even more of the costs that stand between cancer patients and lifesaving treatments, based on an analysis by The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS).

Below is a statement from Louis J. DeGennaro, Ph.D., LLS’s president and chief executive officer:

“Cancer patients know the value of the prohibition against charging sicker patients more for their insurance, the annual cap on out-of-pocket costs, the prohibition of lifetime limits, affordable coverage for patients with low incomes, and cost-sharing assistance for patients who are just getting by. Unfortunately, the latest Senate healthcare bill would abandon the guarantee of these vital patient protections and put lifesaving treatments out of reach for many cancer patients. LLS urges Senators to oppose this bill and work on a bipartisan basis to fix the problems facing cancer patients and other consumers.”

“The latest Senate bill would exacerbate the barriers cancer patients would face under the Senate’s previous draft bill. The latest bill would reinvent the old system of segregating high-risk patients from the rest of consumers—a system that too often failed to provide affordable premiums to cancer patients. Meanwhile, Senators missed an opportunity to address the serious problems with their previous bill drafts that would lead to higher premiums, higher cost-sharing and the revival of lifetime limits for cancer patients with all types of insurance coverage.”

“Last year, we outlined to Congress our core principles for meaningful coverage: guarantee access, promote affordability, ensure quality and encourage stability. Unfortunately, rather than advancing these principles, the Senate bill would put cancer care further out of reach—especially for older and lower-income patients struggling to afford their treatments today.”

“We are unapologetically a ‘patients first’ organization, and it is time for policy changes that address the many obstacles patients face today. LLS and the patients we serve are committed to working with Congress to advance policies that address the many significant obstacles to care, even with the existing protections provided by the ACA. There are bipartisan, proven solutions that will break down barriers for cancer patients, and we urge policymakers to work with us to advance them.”

About The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society® (LLS) is the world’s largest voluntary health agency dedicated to blood cancer. The LLS mission: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin’s disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world, provides free information and support services, and is the voice for all blood cancer patients seeking access to quality, affordable, coordinated care.

Founded in 1949 and headquartered in Rye Brook, NY, LLS has chapters throughout the United States and Canada. To learn more, visit www.LLS.org. Patients should contact the Information Resource Center at (800) 955-4572, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET.

###