

CANCER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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

Cancer Organizations Express Opposition to American Health Care Act

Washington, May 4, 2017 – As the House of Representatives prepares to vote on the American Health Care Act, the undersigned organizations in the Cancer Leadership Council issue the following statement:

Our organizations – cancer advocacy organizations, research foundations, and cancer professional societies – stand with the 16 million Americans living with cancer. The patients we represent are among the many millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions. Cancer patients have serious health care needs from the time of diagnosis, and those who survive treatment and enter long-term survivorship face a lifetime of monitoring and follow-up care. Cancer survivors may confront a wide range of late and long-term side effects of cancer treatment, including second cancers.

The American Health Care Act (AHCA), as revised to include the MacArthur amendment and the Upton-Long amendment, remains inadequate to meet the needs of cancer survivors. Instead of protecting people with pre-existing conditions and safeguarding their ability to purchase adequate and affordable health insurance coverage, the revised AHCA offers an inadequate patchwork of risk pools and financial assistance. If the AHCA is approved, cancer patients will be left with no assurance that they can obtain adequate health insurance and the care they need.

The Upton-Long amendment is a woefully inadequate effort to provide an assurance of access to care for those with pre-existing conditions, including 16 million Americans with cancer.

There are additional ways in which the AHCA fails Americans with cancer. By permitting states to waive the guarantee of essential health benefits, the legislation would eliminate the guarantee of access to all elements of cancer care. The legislation would also deprive cancer patients, who were at risk of medical bankruptcy prior to the Affordable Care Act, of protections against annual and lifetime coverage caps and put them once again at great financial risk.

The legislation poses different risks to different populations of cancer patients. Young adult survivors of cancer have enjoyed benefits from Medicaid expansion, a benefit threatened by the legislation. Substantially higher premiums for older Americans, as permitted by the legislation, will have a disproportionate impact on cancer patients because cancer incidence increases with age.

We caution against consideration of this legislation prior to receipt of the Congressional Budget Office analysis of the bill's fiscal impact and its effects on the number of Americans with health insurance.

Due to the inadequacy of the AHCA in protecting cancer patients' access to appropriate cancer care, we oppose the legislation. We urge Members of Congress to stand with cancer patients and others with pre-existing conditions by rejecting this legislation.

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American Society for Radiation Oncology

CancerCare

Cancer Support Community

Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy

International Myeloma Foundation

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

LIVESTRONG

Lymphoma Research Foundation

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

National Patient Advocate Foundation

Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance

Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

Sarcoma Foundation of America

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