

CANCER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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

September 25, 2017

Delivered electronically to GCHcomments@finance.senate.gov

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

The Cancer Leadership Council represents cancer patients, survivors, physicians, and other health professionals. We are writing to express our serious reservations about the potential impact of the Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Johnson legislation on cancer patients and survivors. We believe that the legislation will seriously undermine access to affordable and adequate health insurance for many cancer survivors. As a result, the legislation has the potential to adversely affect cancer care and cancer outcomes in the United States.

These are our specific concerns about the Graham-Cassidy legislation:

- The bill will create uncertainty and fear among cancer survivors about their access to care. A diagnosis with cancer is frightening, as it is the beginning of a treatment journey that is often difficult and uncertain. In addition, from the moment of diagnosis, a cancer patient has a pre-existing condition. The Graham-Cassidy legislation will create even greater fear and uncertainty for cancer patients by undermining protections for those with pre-existing conditions. If these protections do not exist in all states, cancer patients may be charged higher premiums for their insurance, may not be able to buy coverage at all, or may only have access to plans that are inadequate for their treatment needs.
- The bill will dramatically change Medicaid, possibly curtailing access to quality care for many cancer patients. As many as one-third of children with cancer receive care through Medicaid, and the Graham-Cassidy would change Medicaid in a way that could hinder access to optimal cancer treatment for these children.
- Cancer patients live in all states of the nation, and they deserve access to quality care regardless of the state in which they live. The Graham-Cassidy legislation will

significantly reduce overall spending for assistance with purchase of insurance and will create funding winners and losers among the states.

- The legislation imposes difficult – if not impossible – implementation deadlines, and then the bill creates a dramatic funding cliff after ten years. We do not believe that Medicaid programs and insurance marketplaces can be transformed according to the tight timelines of the bill. Of even greater concern is the funding cliff that will occur after ten years. This is another element of uncertainty that cancer patients should not be asked to confront.

We urge the committee to use the opportunity of the September 25, 2017, hearing on Graham-Cassidy to begin a discussion about lasting bipartisan health care reform solutions. We urge that this process include the opportunity for significant input from our organizations and other stakeholders representing patients and health care professionals. We also strongly caution that no legislation move forward until there is a complete Congressional Budget Office analysis of not only the fiscal impact of the bill but also its effects on insurance coverage and premium rates.

We stand ready to be part of meaningful discussions toward long-term and patient-centered health care reforms.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Clinical Oncology
CancerCare
Cancer Support Community
International Myeloma Foundation
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
LIVESTRONG
Lymphoma Research Foundation
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Comprehensive Cancer Network
Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Susan G. Komen