

# Patient Advocates Applaud Cancer Drug Parity Act filed in both the U.S. House and Senate

*Bipartisan, bicameral legislation will bring equality to insurance coverage of life-saving medicines*

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, October 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Coalition to Improve Access to Cancer Care (CIACC) and its members from across the cancer patient and provider community today applauded lawmakers Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), and Tina Smith (D-MN), Representatives Higgins (D-NY 26), Guthrie (R-KY 2), Matsui (D-CA 6) Bilarakis (R-FL 12), Morelle (D-NY 25) and Grothman (R-WI 6) for introducing legislation to bring fairness to the way that cancer medications are covered by insurance companies.

"The Cancer Drug Parity Act" will end the out-of-pocket cost disparity for orally administered cancer treatments for the approximately 140 million patients covered by federally regulated health plans.

Currently, most insurance companies place traditional IV chemotherapy treatments under a patient's medical benefit, while oral chemotherapy treatments are covered as part of a patient's prescription drug benefit. Because of this discrepancy, patients on oral treatments can be forced to shoulder much higher out of pocket costs for their medications. For some cancers, oral medications are the only line of treatment.

"Cancer coverage needs to keep pace with advances in cancer treatment," said Robin Levy, Senior Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the International Myeloma Foundation who chairs the Coalition to Improve Access to Cancer Care. "The Cancer Drug Parity Act will ensure that no matter the diagnosis, cancer patients will have fair and equal access to any treatment their oncologist deems best for them, without having to worry about whether a particular treatment will be covered by their insurance policy. We are excited to work with the sponsors in both the House and Senate to advance this legislation and bring true parity to all cancer medicines."

This legislation ensures that any health plan covering cancer care offer patients the same level of cost-sharing for all forms of cancer medicine.

"Anticancer therapies are becoming more and more complex, and the majority of new drug approvals are oral. However, many times the healthcare team is forced to choose between the best treatment for a patient, which may be an oral chemotherapy, and what they can afford or

will be covered under their insurance plan. The Cancer Drug Parity Act would help reduce the large cost difference between self-administered oral chemotherapies and intravenous medications that require administration in a physician's office or hospital. This bill helps to remove barriers based on cost and improve access for patients, while allowing providers to make the most evidence-based treatment decisions for their patients," said Larry Buie, a hematology/oncology pharmacist and president of the Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association.

CIACC has worked with local partners to enact legislation in 43 states and the District of Columbia to prevent insurance companies from applying different cost sharing rates to oral cancer medicine than they do to chemotherapy or other injected treatments. But those state laws address health plans regulated at the state level, and do not apply to more than half of the country with federally regulated health coverage. The Cancer Drug Parity Act would fix this disparity for plans regulated by the federal government.

About the Coalition to Improve Access to Cancer Care:

The Coalition for Improved Access to Cancer Care is a patient-focused organization representing patients, health-care professionals, care centers and industry committed to ensuring cancer patients have equal access to all approved cancer regimes, including (but not limited to) oral and intravenous drugs, injections, surgery, radiation, transplantation, etc. Follow us on Twitter @CancerCare4All.

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Robin Levy

The Coalition to Improve Access to Cancer Care

+1 201 202 9137

[email us here](#)

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