The Cancer Leadership Council (CLC) applauds the decision by President Clinton to issue an executive memorandum clarifying that Medicare will reimburse routine patient care costs for patients enrolled in clinical trials. The CLC includes 26 organizations representing cancer patients, their families, and their caregivers.

The President’s announcement is the culmination of a multi-year advocacy effort by cancer interests to persuade Medicare to reimburse all routine patient care costs. This initiative has been championed by Senators Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Connie Mack (R-FL) and Representatives Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), who have introduced legislation to require Medicare coverage of clinical trials in each of the last three Congresses. Enactment of this bill has been a primary legislative goal for cancer advocates.

The CLC is pleased that the coverage decision applies to clinical trials for all diseases as well as trials approved or supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Cancer advocates have long maintained that coverage of trials sponsored by industry, but reviewed by FDA, is essential to cancer patients, for whom those trials may represent critical treatment options.

Studies have shown that senior citizens are dramatically underrepresented in cancer clinical trials, and removing reimbursement barriers is an important step in boosting elderly Americans’ participation in clinical research. The CLC pledges its support to educational and outreach efforts to physicians and patients regarding this coverage clarification.

We look forward to working with the Administration on the implementation of this important benefit.

Cancer Leadership Council

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support, and Education
American Cancer Society
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology & Oncology, Inc.
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Cancer Care, Inc.
Cancer Research Foundation of America
The Children’s Cause, Inc.
Coalition of National Cancer Cooperative Groups
Colorectal Cancer Network
Cure For Lymphoma Foundation
Kidney Cancer Association
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation
National Alliance for Breast Cancer Organizations
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Prostate Cancer Coalition
North American Brain Tumor Coalition
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization

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