May 9, 2006

Dear Senator:

The undersigned organizations representing cancer patients, researchers, and caregivers are writing to express opposition to S.1955, the Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act of 2005, which will soon be considered by the Senate. This bill could have a serious impact on the quality of cancer care available to millions of Americans.

We understand the desire to improve the access of small business owners and their employees to affordable health insurance coverage, but this goal should not be achieved at the expense of high quality cancer care. Many states have enacted legislation to guarantee access to key components of cancer prevention, screening, and care, including screening for breast, cervical, colon, and prostate cancer; coverage of routine patient care costs in clinical trials; appropriate coverage of off-label uses of cancer drugs; smoking cessation services; and psychosocial services important to cancer patients.

The bill soon to be considered by the Senate may have the effect of denying these state protections not only to those insured through Small Business Health Plans, but also those in the large group and individual markets. Under the provisions of S. 1955, insurers that do not offer plans that are consistent with a state’s benefit, service, and provider laws will be required only to offer an optional plan that is similar to a state employee plan in one of the five most populous states. This standard is inadequate to ensure access to appropriate cancer prevention, screening, and care.

The cancer community has been able to count on strong Congressional support for efforts to improve the quality of cancer care provided to Medicare beneficiaries. We hope we can count on you to provide those same protections to those who rely on private health coverage.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

- American Psychosocial Oncology Society
- American Society of Clinical Oncology
- Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
- C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition
- Cancer Care
- The Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
- Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups
- Fertile Hope
- International Myeloma Foundation
- Kidney Cancer Association
- Lance Armstrong Foundation

- The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- The Lung Cancer Alliance
- Lymphoma Research Foundation
- Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation
- National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
- National Prostate Cancer Coalition
- North American Brain Tumor Coalition
- Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
- Sarcoma Foundation of America
- The Wellness Community
- Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization