



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

May 9, 2007

Via Telecopy

The Honorable Mike Leavitt
Secretary
Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 615-F – HHH Bldg.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

The undersigned organizations representing cancer survivors, physicians, and researchers are writing to urge completion of the process initiated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) evaluating the drug compendia that may be used to determine a “medically accepted indication” of drugs and biologics used in an anti-cancer chemotherapeutic regimen. It is in the interest of cancer patients and physicians for CMS to complete and publish the results of its assessment and otherwise to preserve the compendia process.

In late January 2006, CMS initiated a review of potential successors to the compendia listed in the statute as well as additional compendia. It held a meeting of the Medicare Coverage Advisory Committee, now the Medicare Evidence Development and Coverage Advisory Committee, on March 30, 2006, and posted the results of the committee’s voting on April 4, 2006. Since that time, there has been no statement or action by CMS related to this process.

To ensure that the compendia continue to fulfill the function that Congress anticipated – setting standards for Medicare coverage of drugs supported by evidence-based review – it is important that CMS make public the conclusions it has reached from this process. In this manner, CMS can protect the confidence of payers, physicians, and patients in the compendia and guarantee that the list of compendia utilized by Medicare contractors is fully up-to-date.

