February 11, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madame Speaker and Mr. Leader:

The undersigned cancer organizations urge you to include in the final stimulus package (HR. 1) assistance for uninsured Americans to purchase COBRA coverage. Our organizations, representing cancer patients, physicians, and researchers, observe every day the impact of loss of health insurance on cancer survivors. COBRA payment assistance will help cancer patients gain access to necessary cancer care.

A report released recently by the American Cancer Society and Kaiser Family Foundation describes the gaps in insurance coverage that confront insured Americans who have cancer, and among the problems identified was the high cost of COBRA coverage. Paying for COBRA is a very heavy burden for those with low incomes. Cancer survivors often cannot pay for COBRA coverage, as they find themselves with reduced incomes and depleted assets as a result of their cancer diagnosis.

COBRA payment assistance meets the standards for inclusion in the stimulus package, because access to health insurance for cancer patients will mean utilization of health care services to help them in their battle against cancer.
We urge you to include the most generous possible COBRA payment assistance in the stimulus package.

Sincerely,

Cancer Leadership Council

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Psychosocial Oncology Society
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network
Breast Cancer Network of Strength
C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition
The Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy
Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups
Fertile Hope
Lance Armstrong Foundation
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Lymphoma Research Foundation
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Lung Cancer Partnership
National Patient Advocate Foundation
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Sarcoma Foundation of America
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network
The Wellness Community

cc: The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Minority Whip
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Charles Grassley
The Honorable David Obey
The Honorable Charles Rangel
The Honorable Henry Waxman
The Honorable Jerry Lewis
The Honorable Dave Camp