



H. R. 1409: THE CANCER DRUG PARITY ACT

The Problem: Outdated Coverage Policies Limit Patients' Access to New Lifesaving Drugs

Insurance coverage has not kept pace with innovation in medicine and the growing trend towards orally and other patient administered chemotherapy. Traditionally, intravenous (IV) and injected treatments were the primary methods of chemotherapy delivery, which are covered under a health plan's medical benefit where the patient is only required to pay a small office visit co-pay.

Today, patient administered chemotherapy has become more prevalent and is the standard of care for many types of cancer. Oral chemotherapy also accounts for approximately 35% of the oncology development pipeline. More importantly, many oral anti-cancer medications do not have IV or injected alternatives and are the only option for some cancer patients. As these medications become more prevalent in cancer treatment, they must be as affordable as their IV counterparts.

Since patient administered anti-cancer medications are often covered under a health plan's prescription benefit, many patients are responsible for extremely high and unmanageable co-pays. These co-pays can be hundreds or thousands of dollars per month and, as a result, almost 10% of patients choose not to fill their initial prescriptions for oral anti-cancer medications due to the high rates of cost-sharing.¹

The Solution: The Cancer Drug Parity Act

The Cancer Drug Parity Act requires any health plan that provides coverage for cancer chemotherapy treatment to provide coverage for self-administered anticancer medication at a cost no less favorable than the cost of IV, port administered, or injected anticancer medications. This law is not a mandate as it only applies to health plans that already cover chemotherapy. This bill ensures equality of access and insurance coverage for **ALL** anti-cancer regimens. Health insurance cost-sharing schemes should not create barriers to cancer patients' ability to access potentially life-saving medicines.

REQUEST

Please cosponsor H.R. 1409, the *Cancer Drug Parity Act*, to ensure every cancer patient has access to the anticancer treatments recommended by their physicians.

For more information on the bill or to sign on as a co-sponsor, please contact Rob Butora in Representative Lance's office at Robert.Butora@mail.house.gov or Erin Meegan in Representative Brian Higgins' office at Erin.Meegan@mail.house.gov.

¹ Streeter SB, Schwartzberg L, Husain N, and Johnsrud M, Patient and Plan Characteristics Affecting Abandonment of Oral Oncolytic Prescriptions. *Journal of Oncology Practice*. Vol. 7, Issue 3S: 46s-51s, 2011.

The Patients Equal Access Coalition (PEAC) is a patient focused coalition of organizations representing patients, health care professionals, care centers, and industry collaboratively joined together whose mission is to ensure that cancer patients have equality of access (and equality of insurance coverage) to all approved anticancer regimens including, but not limited to oral and intravenous drugs, injections, surgery, radiation, transplantation, etc.