



Memorandum in Support

The International Myeloma Foundation Supports Equal Access to All Cancer Killing Treatments: Increasing Access to Oral Chemotherapies in Alaska

The International Myeloma Foundation (IMF), the oldest and largest foundation dedicated to improving the quality of life of multiple myeloma patients while working toward prevention and a cure, strongly supports SB 142 and HB 272 which eliminate the cost disparity between oral and intravenous anticancer medications, ensuring access to all anticancer medications for all cancer patients.

Affordable access to FDA-approved oral anticancer medications will save countless lives and in the case of myeloma, oral treatments do NOT have intravenous substitutes, forcing patients to absorb thousands of dollars per month out-of-pocket or forgo treatment altogether. Passing legislation in Alaska that requires health insurers to establish equal out-of-pocket requirements for oral and intravenous anticancer medications, will level the playing field for all cancer patients and ensure they no longer have to worry about accessing and affording care when faced with a cancer diagnosis.

The second most common blood cancer worldwide, multiple myeloma (or myeloma) is a cancer of plasma cells in the bone marrow. It is called "multiple" as the cancer can occur at multiple sites in multiple bones. In 2015 it is estimated that over 26,000 Americans will be diagnosed with myeloma and almost half will lose this battle with this disease. Once a disease of the elderly, it is now being found, in increasing numbers, in people under 65. Fortunately, we have seen dramatic and important advances in treatments for multiple myeloma. However, the needless disparity in coverage between oral drugs and intravenous chemotherapy is a critical issue for many of our patients.

The IMF believes patients and their doctors should be able to take advantage of the treatment that is best for the patient, and not have to select their treatment based on insurance coverage. We extend our sincere gratitude to Senator Cathy Giessel and Representative Dan Saddler, for their leadership on this issue and for introducing SB 142 and HB 272. These bills will ensure that all cancer patients in Alaska have equal access to all anticancer treatments, regardless of how it is administered.

We strongly urge you to support legislation to ensure equality of access and for ALL cancer patients in Alaska. 40 states plus the District of Columbia have passed oral chemotherapy access bills and we urge Alaska to join their ranks.

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