

February 2, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
United States Senate  
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch/Ranking Member Wyden:

In recognition of World Cancer Day, the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) is redoubling our commitment to speak out in support of cancer patients in the United States and worldwide. As the new Congress and Administration wrestle with policy decisions on the provision of high quality, affordable coverage, ASTRO urges policymakers to prioritize reforms that provide stable insurance coverage and patient care.

This year alone, nearly 1.7 million new cancer cases will be diagnosed. Between half and two-thirds of all cancer patients receive radiation therapy, either alone or in conjunction with other treatment approaches, such as immunotherapy, chemotherapy or surgery. ASTRO is the world's largest organization of health care professionals who treat cancer patients using radiation therapy, also known as radiotherapy. Our more than 10,000 members include nearly all practicing radiation oncologists in the U.S.

It is encouraging that cancer deaths have declined by 25% over the past 20 years, a trend due largely to more effective therapies and aggressive early detection and treatment efforts. Research shows, however, that a lack of health insurance leads to delayed diagnosis and treatment, resulting in higher mortality and more invasive treatments.

ASTRO strongly supports finding bipartisan solutions that positively impact families across the country and urges Congress to:

- Preserve the bans on preexisting condition exclusions and annual/lifetime coverage caps
- Maintain guaranteed issue and guaranteed renewability
- Prohibit cost-shifting to cancer patients and providers to cover uncompensated or underfunded care
- Provide cancer patients the access to essential specialty care, the doctor of their choice, and the range of services they need
- Furnish useful, understandable information about health plan options and physician specialist networks to ensure that cancer patients can make informed choices
- Require that all health plans inform physicians of the criteria to participate in provider networks
- Simplify burdensome administrative systems to reduce costs, create a more efficient health care system, and maximize funding for health care services
- Facilitate patient access to clinical trials
- Safeguard access to evidence-based cancer screening and prevention programs
- Ensure that patient safety, quality, and efficiency of care programs improve quality and enhance the doctor/patient relationship and are meaningful to patient and physician alike
- Include physicians in discussions to develop key federal policies related to patient care

American Society for Radiation Oncology

February 2, 2017

Page 1

In honor of World Cancer Day, ASTRO pledges to continue our efforts to research, treat, and cure cancer. We call upon Congress and the Administration to ensure that patients with cancer have access to the lifesaving treatments that they need. Patients fighting cancer should not have to battle for insurance while they battle for their lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Thevenot". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Thevenot  
Chief Executive Officer

*ASTRO is the largest radiation oncology society in the world, with 10,000 members practicing in both hospitals and community based centers who specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies. As the leading organization in radiation oncology, biology, and physics, the Society is dedicated to the advancement of the practice of radiation oncology by promoting excellence in patient care, providing opportunities for educational and professional development, promoting research and disseminating research results, and representing radiation oncology in a rapidly evolving health care environment.*