



September 25, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship represents survivors of all forms of cancer. We are writing to voice our opposition to the Graham-Cassidy legislation. We believe that this legislation, in its original form or in the revised version scheduled for release on Monday, September 25, will put cancer patients and survivors at risk of losing access to cancer care.

Cancer patients consistently say that their diagnosis with cancer changes their lives forever. Many report great stress and fear about managing their initial cancer treatment and follow-up survivorship care. That stress relates to navigating the health care system, making decisions about care, and having the means to pay for their care. Of course, when a person receives a cancer diagnosis, that person forevermore has a pre-existing condition.

The Graham-Cassidy legislation will erode the protections against pre-existing condition limitations that Americans currently enjoy. Cancer patients will likely face higher premiums for coverage that does not cover all elements of their care. They will also face more significant financial burdens related to their care, meaning more of them will have to address financial toxicities associated with their care. A cancer diagnosis is tough news. Graham-Cassidy will make things even tougher for cancer patients.

There will also be overall funding reductions as the result of Graham-Cassidy, with some states facing steep reductions in their funding and therefore facing an impossible task of ensuring assistance for those who need help affording their insurance.

Because many cancer patients – as many as one-third of children with cancer – rely on Medicaid for their care, significant changes in Medicaid pose a threat to those patients. We are particularly concerned about the ability of cancer patients to receive appropriate and adequate treatment, including life-saving new therapies, in the future.

From the time of the release of the Graham-Cassidy legislation, NCCS has offered strong cautions about its impact on cancer patients. We have urged that Congress undertake a thoughtful and deliberate process for consideration of health reform legislation, a bipartisan process that would provide ample opportunity for health care experts, patient advocates, other stakeholders, and the American public to participate in and observe the development of legislation. We have also recommended that no legislation move forward until a full Congressional Budget Office estimate is released and reviewed.



NATIONAL COALITION
FOR CANCER SURVIVORSHIP

The power of survivorship. The promise of quality care.

We offer the warnings about the lack of a transparent and open process again, with greater urgency. We understand that a significant revision of the Graham-Cassidy bill is soon to be released. One version of this revision – we understand there may be several iterations – would put cancer patients at even greater risk of being unable to purchase adequate health insurance. We would also point out that the Congressional Budget Office score that will be released will not be an analysis of the revised bill.

A bill – now revised – that puts so many Americans at risk should not be rushed through the legislative process.

The Committee on Finance should use the hearing on Monday, September 25, as a first step in a bipartisan effort at reform. The time of the committee should not be spent on consideration of a bill that may be released only minutes before the hearing.

We stand ready to participate in an open and deliberate process to improve Americans' access to affordable and adequate health insurance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelley Fuld Nasso".

Shelley Fuld Nasso, MPP
Chief Executive Office