CANCER CARE PLANNING LEGISLATION

The legislation would:

• Help cancer patients through the difficult process of cancer diagnosis, treatment choices, treatment management, and survivorship care by supplying them a written plan or roadmap.

• Promote shared decision-making between patients and their cancer care teams and support informed decisions, as treatment choices are becoming increasingly complex.

• Empower patients with information necessary to help manage and coordinate their care through diagnosis, treatment and survivorship.

How would this legislation encourage cancer care planning?

The legislation would establish a new Medicare service for cancer care planning. A plan can be developed and shared with the Medicare beneficiary at several points in the cancer care continuum, including:

• At the time of diagnosis, for the purposes of planning initial active treatment;

• When there is any substantial change in the condition of the individual, recurrence of disease, changes in the individual’s treatment preferences, or significant revision of the elements of curative care or symptom management for the individual; and

• At the completion of primary treatment for cancer, when the plan may serve as a follow-up survivorship care plan.
Why is a cancer plan necessary for each patient?

In several evaluations of the cancer care system, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) National Cancer Policy Forum has found that cancer patients rarely receive a plan of care. The IOM has said that patients should receive a cancer care plan because the planning process triggers a solid treatment decision-making process and facilitates the coordination of treatment and supportive care, including management of nausea and vomiting, fatigue, anxiety, and depression. After patients finish active treatment, they may transition into a different system for survivorship care. These patients require monitoring of the effects of their cancer treatment and for cancer recurrence, as well as follow-up care provided according to recommended schedules. A written plan facilitates the transition to survivorship and the ongoing follow-up that is required.

Why is a new Medicare service necessary?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has placed a high value on care planning and coordination for all Medicare beneficiaries by establishing the transitional care management service and the complex chronic care management service. The Oncology Care Model (OCM) was launched by CMS in 2016 and is a step in the right direction for cancer care planning. Medicare beneficiaries treated in one of the 190 OCM practices have access to a treatment plan, but not necessarily a survivorship care plan. ALL Medicare beneficiaries should have access to this service, not just the ones who receive their care in OCM practices.

The Affordable Care Act:

- The Affordable Care Act is crucial to protecting the physical, emotional, and financial health of nearly 17 million cancer survivors.
- The ACA protections are giving cancer patients, survivors and their families invaluable peace of mind as they struggle to face cancer.
- Preexisting condition protections, no lifetime limits, and expanded access to care are just some of the ACA’s critical provisions that cancer patients now rely on every day.
- More research is coming out showing that the ACA is fundamentally improving cancer care in America by:
  - Reducing racial disparities in cancer treatment,
  - Promoting earlier diagnosis and treatment of cancers,
  - Expanding access to care for millions of Americans, including through Medicaid expansion.

About NCCS

Founded by and for cancer survivors in 1986, the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship is a public policy nonprofit advocating that the individual needs of patients must be front and center in the delivery of cancer care. NCCS champions policies to improve every phase of cancer care to promote a system that is survivor-focused, evidence-based, quality-driven, affordable and accessible. Combined with efforts to empower and inform patients, such a system will ensure that cancer care is the best possible for survivors, from the time of their diagnosis onward, and for their loved ones.

For more information or to support the cancer care planning legislation, please contact Dan Weber, NCCS Communications Director, at dweber@canceradvocacy.org, or Shelley Fuld Nasso, NCCS CEO, at sfuldnasso@canceradvocacy.org.