



Association of Community Cancer Centers

June 19, 2001

The Honorable John Dingell
Ranking Minority Member, Energy and Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Dear Congressman Dingell:

On behalf of the more than 650 cancer centers that comprise the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), I am writing to thank you and your colleagues for sponsoring H.R. 526, "The Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001." H.R. 526 will help provide quality care to cancer patients. The legislation addresses a few main issues that ACCC considers important:

- Increased access to clinical trials: Cancer patients should be able to have access to these important potentially life-saving tools. ACCC believes any patient protection bill that provides all insured patients with access to both federally and privately funded or approved high-quality, peer-reviewed clinical trials should have the same coverage for routine patient-care costs as patients receiving standard care.
Direct and prompt access to medical specialists: Cancer patients need continuity of care, the option of designating their specialist as their primary care provider, and the ability to have a standing referral to their specialist for ongoing care.

We would particularly like to thank you for including a strong clinical trials provision that provides access to cancer patients. Clinical trials are an important treatment option for current cancer patients. Without clinical trials, new or improved treatments would remain in the laboratory, never reaching the patients who need them.

This legislation builds upon an Executive Memorandum signed by President Clinton last year that provided Medicare beneficiaries with serious and life-threatening diseases access to the full range of clinical trials. ACCC believes this legislation would provide the next step and ensure that privately insured patients have access to clinical trials.

In conclusion, ACCC supports H.R. 526 and knows that passage of this bill is a step in the right direction for privately insured cancer patients who need access to life-saving clinical trials. If you have any additional questions, please contact Christian Downs, Director of Provider Economics and Public Policy, at (301) 984-9496, ext 220.

Sincerely,

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Lee E. Mortenson, D.P.A.
Executive Director
Association of Community Cancer Centers