

Congress Must Take Action to Address Medical Debt

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is pleased to see congressional hearing on medical debt prioritized.

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The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions [held] a hearing [July 11] on addressing medical debt, titled, “What Can Congress Do to End the Medical Debt Crisis in America?” The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) submitted [comments](#) to the committee ahead of the hearing calling on Congress to put forth policy solutions that address the root cause of medical debt by both reducing current medical debt and preventing future medical debt. The following is a statement from Lisa Lacasse, president of ACS CAN.

“As an organization that serves cancer patients, survivors and all those at risk of developing this disease, we are acutely aware of the impact medical debt has on patients, their caregivers and their families. In a recent ACS CAN [Survivor Views survey](#), nearly half of respondents, all of whom are cancer patients and survivors, report being burdened by medical debt. We know the health implications of medical debt on individuals with cancer are significant, as those with medical debt are more likely to be behind on recommended cancer screenings, and many are forced to skip or delay care. This is not acceptable.

“ACS CAN has long fought for public policies that reduce the likelihood or severity of medical debt. Most recently, ACS CAN has been advocating for removing [medical debt from credit reports](#), limiting extraordinary debt collection practices, and determining a patient’s eligibility for financial assistance before their medical bills are due. ACS CAN also supports efforts to relieve medical debt for patients who are already struggling with it, especially when such efforts are paired with other policies that will prevent future medical debt or negative impacts.

“Addressing medical debt in the U.S. is crucial to accomplishing ACS CAN’s mission of ending cancer as we know it, for everyone. We are encouraged to see Congress prioritizing this issue by holding a hearing and will continue to advocate for meaningful action at all levels of government so patients, caregivers and their families can remain focused on their health care needs and not potentially devastating financial impacts of their care.”

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