Representatives Introduce Bipartisan Cancer Care Planning and Communications Act

March 8, 2018 By National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship.

Today, Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA) and Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), both cancer survivors and co-chairs of the Congressional Cancer Survivors Caucus, introduced H.R. 5160, the Cancer Care Planning and Communications (CCPC) Act. A longtime legislative priority of the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, the bill would create a Medicare code to reimburse providers for time and resources used to create cancer care plans for Medicare beneficiaries.

“The Cancer Care Planning and Communications Act is a tangible way to significantly improve the quality of care for cancer patients in Medicare,” said NCCS CEO Shelley Fuld Nasso. “Care plans before, during, and after treatment encourage communication between providers and patients, and help alleviate some anxiety at every phase of the care continuum. The CCPC Act would empower patients with tools to manage and coordinate their care from active treatment throughout survivorship. NCCS and our partners look forward to working with Reps. DeSaulnier and Poe to move the CCPC Act forward.”

“Medical breakthroughs are at an all-time high, but advancements in doctor-patient communications are not keeping pace. We know that less than half of all cancer patients feel adequately informed about their diagnosis. Without a written plan explaining treatments and expected symptoms, patients are often left with more questions than answers. As a cancer survivor, who is grateful to have a healthy and full life ahead of me, I hope that my experience and this legislation will help others better navigate a diagnosis,” said Congressman Mark DeSaulnier.

“Cancer is an epidemic in our country. Approximately 1.7 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer this year alone. As a cancer survivor myself, I know how difficult it can be to understand what the plan for a patients’ treatment is,” said Congressman Ted Poe. “This legislation takes a positive step forward by incentivizing doctors to help their patients understand their planned cancer care path and giving them the peace of mind, all cancer patients, and their families deserve.”

“As a cancer survivor, I know firsthand how important having a care plan is to receiving the best care possible,” said Lee Jones, a cancer survivor. “A care plan is not only critical to fostering communication between a patient and doctor, but it serves as a roadmap in helping navigate the

difficult process of cancer diagnosis, treatment choices, and treatment management. This is particularly true for older survivors on Medicare, who also are dealing with risk of recurrence, secondary cancers and other health issues. I am proud to support the passage of the Cancer Care Planning and Communications Act, and hope it is quickly passed by Congress to help make sure all patients receive the best care possible."

"We commend the Congressional Cancer Survivors Caucus co-chairs for advancing this important legislation," said Donald L. Trump, MD, FACP, CEO and Executive Director of the Inova Schar Cancer Institute. "The data show clearly that personalized and coordinated care leads to better outcomes – including longer survival. Cancer care is more and more complicated – and successful; it is critical that physicians and patients be full partners in their treatment, that the overall plan of treatment and post-treatment care be fully developed and communicated — that's what the Cancer Care Planning and Communications Act is promoting."

Patient and professional organizations supporting the CCPC Act:

American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer; American Society of Clinical Oncology; Association of Community Cancer Centers; Association of Oncology Social Work; Cancer Legal Resource Center; Cancer Support Community; College of American Pathologists; Colon Cancer Alliance; Critical Mass; Fight Colorectal Cancer; Hematology Oncology Pharmacy Association; International Myeloma Foundation; Lacuna Loft; LIVESTRONG; Lung Cancer Alliance; LUNGevity Foundation; Lymphoma Research Foundation; National Brain Tumor Society; National Patient Advocate Foundation; Oncology Nursing Society; Pancreatic Cancer Action Network; Stupid Cancer; The Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy; The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; Triage Cancer; West Virginia Oncology Society; Zero Prostate Cancer.

Cancer centers supporting the CCPC Act:

City of Hope National Medical Center; Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center; Laura and Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center at NYU Langone; Loma Linda University Cancer Center; Masonic Cancer Center; Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Moffitt Cancer Center; Norris Cotton Cancer Center; Rutgers Cancer Institute; Stanford Cancer Institute; The University of Kansas Cancer Center; The University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center; The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; The University of Virginia Cancer Center; UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Additional information about the CCPC Act is here.

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