



Pharmacists Optimizing Cancer Care®

January 17, 2025

President-Elect Donald J. Trump
Vice President-Elect James D. Vance
c/o Alex Latchman
President-elect Donald J. Trump's Transition Team
Washington, DC
Via Email: AlexL@47transition.com

Dear President-Elect Trump and Vice President-Elect Vance,

On behalf of the Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), congratulations on the 2024 election results and becoming the 47th President of the United States. We are looking forward to working with you on a cause close to the heart of millions of Americans, cancer care.

HOPA is a non-profit professional organization for hematology/oncology pharmacy practitioners and their associates. The organization is comprised of approximately 4,000 members who share a common mission to provide the best possible cancer care. HOPA's membership includes not only hematology/oncology pharmacists, but also pharmacy interns, residents, students/trainees, technicians, researchers, and administrators that specialize in hematology/oncology practice. Members serve in clinical and academic roles at cancer centers, inpatient/outpatient hospitals, clinics, physician offices, community and specialty pharmacies, home health practices, universities, and other healthcare settings across the country.

We would like to take this opportunity to share with you examples of the work hematology/oncology pharmacists do, the challenges they have faced related to chemotherapy drug shortages, and HOPA's policy priorities. Furthermore, we welcome the opportunity to meet with the transition team to offer the pharmacy perspective and discuss cancer care policy.

The Role of Hematology and Oncology Pharmacy Practitioners:

Hematology/oncology pharmacists play an important role in the delivery of care for individuals living with cancer. As an integral part of the cancer care team, these pharmacists represent a broad range of expertise and levels of practice, skills, and responsibilities.

Pharmacists are involved with the care of cancer patients in all stages of their treatment. They help to educate patients about their treatment plan, prepare them for side effects, and address any questions they may have. Hematology/oncology pharmacists also work with other cancer care providers to ensure a current and accurate medication list, assist in determining the most appropriate therapy, monitor the efficacy of medications, mitigating some of the financial toxicity associated with therapies, and manage the adverse effects that often accompany cancer treatment. As the care of cancer patients continues to be challenged with high-cost therapies, medication shortages, regulatory requirements, and dwindling reimbursement, the hematology/oncology pharmacist is heavily relied upon to provide support for the rest of the clinical team, in an effort to improve overall cancer care and patient quality of life.

Key Issues of HOPA:

HOPA's main priority has always been how to optimize care for cancer patients, which includes increasing access to cancer care. In particular, HOPA is interested in how to increase patient access to oral anticancer medications, prevent and mitigate chemotherapy drug shortages, and advance a legislative initiative for clinical pharmacists.

Oral Anticancer Medications:

Oncological advancements in cancer care have led to the development of oral anticancer drugs for patients. Oral anticancer drugs can be administered at home, limiting the amount of time that patients need to travel to and spend at cancer care facilities, which has become increasingly important during the pandemic. Unfortunately, many oral anticancer treatments require higher out-of-pocket costs because of how patient's insurance policies are structured. HOPA is working with Congress to pass legislation that would address the barriers to out of pocket costs by requiring health plans provide



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coverage for oral anticancer medication at a cost no less favorable than the cost of intravenous (IV), port-administered, or injected anticancer medications.

Chemotherapy Drug Shortages:

Drug shortages present serious challenges for HOPA members in their efforts to provide optimal care to individuals affected by cancer. The impact of a drug shortage on individuals with cancer and their families can be severe, resulting in compromises to patient care, safety, access to effective treatments, and ultimately, outcomes. Shortages of critical oncology drugs without therapeutic alternatives can delay or alter treatment regimens, reduce the effectiveness of care, increase toxicities, and heighten healthcare costs. These disruptions also impede clinical research, stall medical advances, and place additional burdens on healthcare providers and systems.

HOPA supports the implementation of robust strategies to mitigate drug shortages, including enhanced communication and transparency, strengthened FDA oversight, incentivized manufacturing redundancies, improved supply chain resilience, and equitable access programs. Notably, HOPA has convened a coalition of over twenty patient advocacy and professional associations from the cancer community to advocate for policies that would mitigate drug shortages. We stand willing to work with your administration to ensure that cancer patients have access to the medication that they need for their care.

Legislative Initiative for Clinical Pharmacists:

HOPA proposes an Integrated Payment Model for Clinical Pharmacists that would integrate clinical pharmacists into a coordinated healthcare team to increase improve patient outcomes, save payers a significant amount of money, and decrease strain on the healthcare system. We envision an integration model derived from a recent state-wide program in Michigan called the Michigan Pharmacists Transforming Care and Quality (MPTCQ) program. The MPTCQ, which grew from a partnership between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) and Michigan Medicine, is a statewide provider-payer program which integrates pharmacists within physician practice throughout the state of Michigan.

This legislative initiative proposal would require the CMS Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to establish a demonstration project to evaluate the benefits of integrating clinical pharmacists into the patient care team while also providing for coverage under the Medicare program for those clinical pharmacists who provide comprehensive clinical pharmacy services to patients. The location of these demonstration projects and the providers participating in this evaluation program would be required to practice in and serve in a medically underserved area (MUA) as defined by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HOPA looks forward to working with your administration to implement this program or set it up administratively.

As the Trump-Vance transition team begins to set your health care policy priorities, we stand ready to work with you to improve access to cancer care. For further questions, or to schedule a meeting please contact Jeremy Scott at jscott@dc-crd.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jolynn Sessions".

Jolynn Sessions, PharmD, BCOP, CPP, FHOPA
HOPA President, 2024-2025

CC:

John Brooks, Team Lead, HHS Agency Review Team