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February 18, 2010

The Honorable Joseph J. Crisco, Co-Chair
The Honorable Steve Fontana, Co-Chair
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Room 2800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 50
AN ACT CONCERNING ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENTS

Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the International Cancer Advocacy Network (ICAN), we are writing in support of Connecticut Senate Bill 50. We thank the Committee for introducing legislation to address this important patient care issue.

The goal of Senate Bill 50 is to ensure that patients have equal access to orally administered anticancer medications. Currently, differences in patient benefit plans result in greater patient out of pocket costs for oral chemotherapy treatments, thereby providing a major barrier to certain treatment options for cancer patients.

It is important to note that this bill does not require insurance companies to provide chemotherapy coverage, nor does it require any particular product be covered. Senate Bill 50 merely requires that where coverage is already being provided, insurance companies cover intravenous therapy and oral chemotherapy treatments in the same manner with respect to co-payments, deductibles, and/or other patient costs. In short, all chemotherapy should be covered the same regardless of the route of administration.

Most insurers and payers agree that access to chemotherapy is critical for adequate insurance coverage. The problem is that coverage standards have not kept up with advancements in therapy. More and more oral medications have been developed and patients need equal access to these life-saving medications.

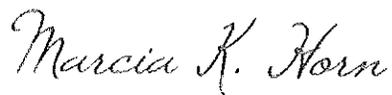
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No patient and/or their health care provider should be forced to base their decision on the most appropriate chemotherapy treatment on reasons other than the best treatment option for the patient. ICAN is firmly in support of this proposed legislation desperately needed to ensure equal coverage and therefore access to life-saving treatment options.

It is for these reasons that we urge you to pass this vital legislation for cancer patients as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,



Marcia K. Horn
President and CEO