May 25, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer,

As the CEO of the Cancer Support Community (CSC), I’m writing to you today to express concern about the potential impact of the American Health Care Act (AHCA) on the cancer patient community, and strongly urge you to reject the AHCA and protect patients dealing with chronic illnesses such as cancer as you consider ways to reform our health care system.

CSC is the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide. We provide support, education, and hope to cancer patients, survivors, and their loved ones, and we touch more than one million people affected by cancer each year with social and emotional support, wellness and education programs, and awareness activities. Our mission is to ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.

Passage of the AHCA in the House of Representatives has caused great concern among patients and advocates. This legislation, as currently written, would place significant burdens on individuals living with cancer. The Senate cannot pass the AHCA in its current form without risking the health and wellbeing of millions of patients.

Patients deserve access to comprehensive, high-quality, timely health care services. This includes preventive services, the full range of essential health benefits, and mental and behavioral health care services. Further, young adults should be able to stay on their parent’s insurance until the age of 26. Patients should also have access to clinical trials without it impacting their ability to obtain or keep health insurance coverage.

Patients must be able to afford health insurance coverage and prescription medications. Cancer patients should not be discriminated against through higher premiums or exorbitant out-of-pocket costs. Community rating and continuous coverage set a dangerous standard for patients, particularly those living with chronic, expensive, life-changing conditions such as cancer. Government-funded subsidies and the expansion of Medicaid are critical to ensure that millions of patients can access the coverage they need. Additionally, cancer patients cannot rely on mechanisms such as health savings accounts to pay for their care, particularly when they do not have incomes that allow them to do so.
Patients deserve equitable care without limits based on pre-existing conditions or lifetime caps on care. Insurance companies should not be able to rescind coverage (except in cases of fraud) or drastically raise premiums without justification. Further, no patient should be discriminated against based on health status, gender, ability level, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic.

As such, CSC supports the following policy principles as the United States health care system continues to evolve:

- **Access**: Individuals impacted by cancer must have access to timely health care.
- **Affordability**: Individuals impacted by cancer must be able to afford to purchase and maintain their health insurance coverage and prescription medications.
- **Equity and Non-Discrimination**: Individuals impacted by cancer must receive equitable treatment within the U.S. health care system.
- **Patient-Centered Care**: Individuals impacted by cancer must receive patient-centered care that is aligned with their needs and preferences.
- **Preventive Services**: Individuals impacted by cancer should have access to no- or low-cost preventive care such as well services, screenings, immunizations, nutrition services, and opportunities to engage in an active lifestyle.
- **Psychosocial Health Services**: Individuals impacted by cancer must have access to high-quality, timely psychosocial health care services.
- **Quality**: Individuals with cancer must be able to utilize high-quality health care services that are effective, efficient, and safe.
- **Research**: Individuals with cancer benefit from a well-funded, robust research infrastructure.
- **Triple Aim**: Individuals with cancer deserve health care that achieves the goals of the triple aim.

I thank you in advance for considering our health care principles and encourage you to protect patients as they deal with medical, emotional, and financial challenges. **The AHCA is not the solution to the challenges that remain in our health care system and CSC stands ready to work with you to determine solutions that both address these challenges and protect the needs of patients.** If CSC can serve as a resource to your work do not hesitate to contact me at kim@cancersupportcommunity.org or 202-659-9709.

Sincerely,

Kim Thiboldeaux  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cancer Support Community National Headquarters

Cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
The Honorable John Barrasso  
The Honorable John Cornyn  
The Honorable Tom Cotton
The Honorable Ted Cruz
The Honorable Mike Enzi
The Honorable Cory Gardner
The Honorable Orrin Hatch
The Honorable Mike Lee
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable John Thune
The Honorable Pat Toomey