



November 7th, 2023

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo:

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) offers its endorsement of critical patient protections included in the *Better Mental Health Care, Lower-Cost Drugs, and Extenders Act*. This bill reflects the hard bipartisan work of the Committee over the past year to expand mental health care under Medicaid and Medicare, reduce prescription drug costs for seniors at the pharmacy counter, and implement critical PBM reforms. Our comments on specific sections of the bill follow.

***Sec. 109. Requiring Enhanced & Accurate Lists of (REAL) Health Providers Act.***

We strongly support this provision which mandates that Medicare Advantage (MA) plans maintain accurate and publicly accessible provider directories starting in 2026. We agree that this obligation must include all medically necessary covered benefits, including specialty care, at in-network cost-sharing levels.

Access to cancer care at a small general hospital or community oncology clinic is not the same as access to centers specializing in treatments for certain serious diseases. Furthermore, some treatments available to blood cancer patients are only available at a small number of specialized cancer care providers. This provision will help patients navigate their insurance to locate the right experts for their condition, ensuring timely and appropriate care.

***Section 201. Assuring Pharmacy Access and Choice for Medicare Beneficiaries.***

Blood cancer takes a demanding physical, mental, and emotional toll - and many face the daunting task of managing their own care. By requiring Part D plan sponsors to contract with a minimum percentage of essential retail pharmacies, including independent community pharmacies, it ensures that patients have a more comprehensive network of accessible pharmacies for their medication needs.

We look forward to continuing to work together on these issues moving forward on behalf of the 1.6 million patients living with blood cancer in the U.S. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact [Beverly.Hart@lls.org](mailto:Beverly.Hart@lls.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Connell".

Brian Connell  
Vice President, Federal Affairs  
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society