



Oncology Nursing Society

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April 16, 2009

The Honorable Steve Israel
United States House of Representatives
2457 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Israel:

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) – the largest professional oncology group in the United States, composed of more than 37,000 nurses and other health professionals dedicated to ensuring access to quality care for people with cancer – we are writing to express our deep gratitude to you for introducing the *Assuring and Improving Cancer Treatment Education and Cancer Symptom Management Act of 2009* (H.R. 1927). Your important bill provides much-needed Medicare reimbursement for the provision of a one-hour treatment education session for people with cancer, and sustains and expands the nation's cancer symptom management research portfolio through efforts at the National Institutes of Health and the Institute of Medicine.

As you know, many people with cancer experience side effects, symptoms, and late side effects associated with their disease and their treatment – all of which can have a serious impact on the effectiveness of their treatment, their health, well-being, and quality of life. Fortunately, many of these side effects can be mitigated, or controlled, by providing symptom care management; educating people with cancer and their caregivers about all aspects of the care to be provided to the individual; informing the patient regarding any potential symptoms, side effects, or adverse events; explaining ways in which side effects and adverse events can be minimized and health and well-being maximized; and offering clear guidance regarding when the patient and/or caregiver should contact the health care provider, with respect to a particular side effect or symptom. We very much appreciate that H.R. 1927 recognizes the role that oncology nurses play in the provision of treatment education to people with cancer and their caregivers. Taken together, all the components of the bill will help to ensure that people with cancer have access to the comprehensive symptom management care they need and deserve.

Again, thank you for introducing H.R. 1927; your leadership and commitment to the cancer community are invaluable. We also would like to take this opportunity to commend your outstanding staffer, Scott Wetzel; you and the people of your Congressional district are well-served by his intelligence, competence, expertise, and enthusiasm. If we can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact us, or our Health Policy Manager, Leslie Greenberg (412/859-6401, lgreenberg@ons.org). We look forward to working with you and your staff throughout the 111th Congress.

Sincerely,

Brenda Nevidjon, RN, MSN, FAAN
President

Paula Rieger, RN, MSN, AOCN, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Scott Wetzel, Legislative Assistant