



May 21, 2021

The Honorable Susan Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for S.1536, the *Medical Nutrition Therapy Act*

Dear Senator Collins and Senator Peters:

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), I write to thank you for introducing S. 1536, the *Medical Nutrition Therapy Act*. This important legislation would expand Medicare Part B coverage of outpatient medical nutrition therapy services to a number of currently uncovered diseases or conditions, including cancer. The *Medical Nutrition Therapy Act* would also authorize nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists and psychologists to refer their patients for medical nutrition therapy.

As you may know, an estimated 1,806,590 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in the U.S. this year and 606,520 people will die from the disease. Nutrition therapy is an important tool often used to help cancer patients maintain their strength and a healthy body weight, and to decrease side effects that occur both during and after treatment. Oncology nurses are the health professionals involved in the administration and monitoring of chemotherapy and managing the associated side effects cancer patients may experience. Every day, we see the pain and suffering caused by cancer and understand the physical, emotional, and financial challenges that people with cancer and their families face throughout their diagnosis and treatment.

ONS is a professional organization of over 39,000 registered nurses and other health care providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. ONS members are a diverse group of professionals who represent a variety of professional roles, practice settings, and subspecialty practice areas. Oncology nurses are leaders in the health care arena, committed to continuous learning and leading the transformation of cancer care by advocating for high-quality care for people with cancer.

Please know that ONS and its members very much appreciate your leadership in support of cancer patient access to medical nutrition therapy. We stand ready to work with you and your staff to reduce and prevent suffering from cancer. We would be happy to discuss ways in which ONS may be of assistance in this endeavor and would encourage you to contact Alec Stone, Director of Public Affairs, at astone@ons.org. We look forward to engaging in an ongoing dialogue to address issues of importance to our cancer patients and ways in which we can promote public health.

Sincerely,

The Oncology Nursing Society