

Written by By American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc.
Friday, 06 January 2017 12:29

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) sent a letter to Governor Susana Martinez today expressing concerns that proposed changes to federal financing of the Medicaid program currently being discussed in Congress could impact cancer patients and survivors in New Mexico who depend on the program for their care. The letter was sent to select governors invited to attend a Medicaid meeting led by the Senate Finance Committee later this month.

A statement from Chris Hansen, president of ACS CAN, follows:

“As Governor Martinez and members of Congress consider possible changes to federal financing of the Medicaid program, it is critically important that low-income cancer patients, survivors and those at risk of the disease don’t face any gap in coverage of prevention or treatment.

“ACS CAN has serious concerns about how alternative financing proposals being considered by Congress – specifically block grants and per capita caps – could impact cancer patients and survivors who depend on Medicaid for their care. These approaches could end up costing New Mexico more and could jeopardize access to care for the state’s most vulnerable, low-income cancer patients and survivors.

“Fixed federal payments based on projected expenses or number of enrollees can ultimately leave states on the hook for unexpected costs, largely due to the unpredictability of health care costs. In addressing the shortfall, states often cut funding and services or increase cost sharing for enrollees – negatively impacting patients who rely on the program for care.

“Any increases in cost-sharing deter low-income patients from getting medical care. Studies show that individuals are less likely to seek health services, including life-saving preventive screenings, when they must pay for those services out-of-pocket. For a person with cancer, enrollment freezes, waiting lists and out-of-pocket cost-sharing could mean that a cancer diagnosis is delayed, resulting in a later-stage diagnosis when treatment costs are higher and survival is less likely.

Governor: low-income cancer patients, survivors need continued access to meaningful health insurance

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“Block grants and capping Medicaid reimbursement costs per enrollee raise serious issues about New Mexico’s Human Services Department’s ability to offer low-income New Mexicans quality, affordable and comprehensive health care coverage, particularly for those suffering from cancer.“ACS CAN asks that Governor Martinez consider the effects that certain funding changes to Medicaid will have not only on New Mexico’s finances but also on cancer patients and survivors in the state.

“We are confident that Governor Martinez and her administration are committed to preserving access to quality, affordable and comprehensive health coverage for New Mexico’s low-income cancer patients, survivors and those at risk of cancer.

“ACS CAN stands ready to work with Governor Martinez, the New Mexico legislature and members of Congress to eliminate death and suffering from cancer by ensuring cancer patients and survivors in your state have access to uninterrupted and meaningful health insurance coverage.”

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard.

Visit: www.acscan.org

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