



January 22, 2020

The Honorable Jene Vickrey, Chairman
The Honorable Cindy Neighbor, Ranking Member
Room 281-N Kansas State Capitol
300 SW Tenth Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1504

Dear Chairman Vickrey and Ranking Member Neighbor,

The Kansas Society of Clinical Oncology (KaSCO) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) write to you in strong opposition of legislation pending in the House Insurance Committee. House Bill 2053 would allow short-term limited duration health plans to be renewed for up to 36 months, which may include plans that do not comply with patient protections mandated in the Affordable Care Act. These short-term plans are not comprehensive health insurance options and could leave cancer patients without any accessible options for high-quality cancer care in Kansas.

Founded in 1994, KaSCO is the largest oncology professional organization in the state. KaSCO is a powerful community of oncologists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other allied health professionals who provide a voice for multidisciplinary cancer care teams and the patients they serve. ASCO is the national organization representing approximately 45,000 physicians and other health care professionals specializing in cancer treatment, diagnosis, and prevention. ASCO members are also dedicated to conducting research that leads to improved patient outcomes, and we are committed to ensuring that evidence-based practices for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer are available to all Americans.

In 2017, our affiliate organization, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, released [Principles for Patient-Centered Health Care Reform](#) which include recommendations designed to ensure access to high-quality cancer care amid the changing U.S. healthcare delivery landscape. HB 2053 violates many of these principles. We call your attention to ASCO's framework for ensuring quality cancer care delivery, including:

- All Americans should have access to affordable and sufficient healthcare coverage regardless of their income or health status. **To ensure protected access, the current ban on pre-existing condition limitations, elimination of annual and lifetime coverage caps, and maintenance of guaranteed renewability should be preserved.**
- Any efforts to reform the healthcare system at the national, state, or local levels should ensure that individuals with healthcare insurance can continue to access affordable insurance without interruption.

- All individuals with cancer should have health insurance that guarantees access to high-quality cancer care that is delivered by a cancer specialist and that provides the full range of services needed by patients with cancer a timely manner.
- Policymakers should, in any policy changes, promote and protect cancer prevention and screening services, as they are key to reducing cancer mortality.

HB 2053 would leave many cancer patients without meaningful coverage in Kansas. It would take away the protections of essential health benefits for those with cancer and coverage of pre-existing conditions. KaSCO and ASCO are concerned that these short-term plans are able to “rescind” care plans based on health status, which presumably would leave people newly diagnosed with cancer without coverage. We are united in the opinion that such a lack of adequate health insurance poses a major barrier to receiving appropriate and timely treatment.

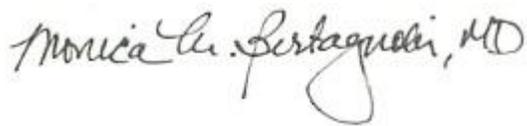
At a minimum, a provision should be added to HB 2053 triggering open-enrollment in the Kansas Health Care Exchange should a cancer patient be denied coverage or have coverage rescinded by a short-term health plan. This would ensure patients in your state continue to have access to meaningful, high-quality care regardless of plan.

In closing, KaSCO and ASCO strongly urge the Kansas House Insurance Committee to vote no on HB 2053 and protect cancer patients from these plans. We ask you to restrict short-term policies and not allow them to expand. Short-term limited duration health plans are not a substitute for quality health insurance. If you have questions or would like assistance on any issue involving the care of individuals with cancer, please contact Jeremy Deutsch, MD at jeremy.deutsch@cancercenterofkansas.com or Aaron Segel at ASCO at aaron.segel@asco.org.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Deutsch, MD
President
Kansas Society of Clinical Oncology



Monica Bertagnolli, MD, FACS, FASCO
Chair of the Board
Association for Clinical Oncology