

Testimony

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**Before the
House Insurance Committee**

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Hershey Medical Center
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WORKING TO ACHIEVE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE QUALITY HEALTH AND LONG TERM LIVING SERVICES FOR ALL PENNSYLVANIANS

Good morning.

It is a pleasure for the Governor's Office of Health Care Reform to appear before you today to provide brief testimony on House Bill 1865. We have been here many times before to discuss critically important health care issues with you. It is clear that your Committee remains focused on and committed to dealing with those health issues that affect so many Pennsylvanians.

The Governor believes that all Pennsylvanians should have access to quality, affordable health care. Certainly those Pennsylvanians who are unfortunate enough to be fighting the "fight of their lives" when battling cancer, should not have to choose treatment options based on cost and neither should their physicians' treatment options be constrained because of cost.

As the medical and pharmaceutical communities make great advances in cancer treatments, alternative treatment options are emerging especially in the area of oral chemotherapy; and it appears that we are just at the beginning. Oral chemotherapy, as opposed to intravenous chemotherapy, has distinct medical advantages, but oral chemotherapy has other advantages, not the least of which is reduction in inpatient and outpatient expenses and costs of administration.

How wonderful for a cancer patient to hear that there is a pill that can cure or put her disease into remission. How cruel to learn that, although she has insurance to cover chemotherapy, she can't take the pill because she can't afford the high out of pocket expenses. If she's lucky, there will be comparable i.v. chemo which will carry a lesser out of pocket expense.

Requiring parity in co-payments, deductibles, co-insurance and maximum out of pocket expenses regardless of the form of administration of chemotherapy makes sense and it's the right thing to do. It provides patients with quality and affordable health care.

Other states have passed similar legislation and Pennsylvania should as well. Our office believes this bill is a first step in dealing with this issue. And we look forward to expanded legislation that would protect every cancer patient from unaffordable chemotherapy medication, regardless of the form of administration.

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