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March 5, 2010

The Honorable Anthony DeLuca
House of Representatives
115 Irvis Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2032

RE: HB 1865

Dear Insurance Committee Chairman DeLuca:

The Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association supports the intentions behind House Bill 1865 and we appreciate the opportunity to provide the following brief comments.

Unfortunately, coverage inequities exist between intravenously administered anti-cancer medications that are typically covered under a health plan's medical benefit and orally administered chemotherapy medications which are typically covered as part of a prescription drug benefit. The difference in coverage may require a patient utilizing oral chemotherapy to incur significantly higher out-of-pocket costs in the form of either a copayment or coinsurance.

Currently, very few chemotherapy treatments are available in both intravenous and oral formulations. The utilization of oral agent is not a patient convenience, but rather a necessity. Higher cost sharing for oral medications may limit treatment options and result in patients receiving less effective and /or overall more expensive care. In particular, this coverage disparity may negatively impact care for patients who are prescribed oral anti-cancer agents for which there is no IV equivalent or clear clinical substitute.

The Pennsylvania Pharmacist Association supports the concept of eliminating these unnecessary barriers to chemotherapeutic care. We all know that cancer is a very serious disease and one where receiving the diagnosis can be extremely scary. The implementation of House Bill 1865 will at least help ease the financial consequences of such a cancer diagnosis. Please consider lending your support to this bill.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Epple, CAE
Executive Director

CC: Insurance Committee