



November 10, 2021

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Richard Neal  
372 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-2101

Leader Chuck Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Frank Pallone  
2107 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-3006

Leader Mitch McConnell  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mike Crapo  
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Leader Kevin McCarthy  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Kevin Brady  
1011 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4308

Senator Ron Wyden  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
1035 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4705

**Re: Support Cancer Equity through the Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act (S. 1873 / H.R. 1946)**

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leaders Schumer, McConnell, and McCarthy, Committee Chairs Wyden, Neal, and Pallone, and Ranking Members Crapo, Brady, and McMorris Rodgers:

We are writing to request your support for the Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act (S. 1873 / H.R. 1946), which will authorize the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to evaluate and cover blood-based multi-cancer early detection tests as well as future test methods (e.g., urine or hair tests), once they are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Blood-based testing enables patients to be screened for dozens of cancers based upon a single blood draw in almost any healthcare setting.

As noted in the Act, “Diagnosing and treating cancer earlier often results in less invasive treatments for patients, which are also less expensive. According to peer reviewed literature, treatment of metastatic cancer is two times more costly than treatment of cancer before it metastasizes.” Unfortunately, the benefits of early cancer detection to Medicare beneficiaries are limited to five cancers that are detectable through mammography, colorectal and select other screenings. Yet, according to the National Cancer Institute, seventy-one percent of the 600,000 annual cancer deaths are from types of cancer without a Medicare-covered early detection test. A disproportionate number of those are from communities of color.

Indeed, across many forms of cancer, populations that are in the minority in the United States experience higher mortality rates compared to non-Hispanic white populations. Earlier this year, the National Minority

Quality Forum (NMQF) explored the disparities in late-stage diagnosis and outcomes with a focus on cancers that do not have available screenings. Across many of the unscreened cancers, such as esophageal, ovarian, pancreatic, and stomach, individuals who are Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) are more often diagnosed in the distant, or later, stages of cancer compared to NHW individuals.

The Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act, therefore, is essential to extend the authority of the Medicare program to cover blood-based multi-cancer early detection tests that will improve the lives of Medicare beneficiaries and their families. The science driving cancer screenings is advancing rapidly, and healthcare policy must keep pace. This Act will have benefits for all seniors, a population cohort at a higher risk for cancer overall, but in light of morbidity and mortality disparities, it portends a particular benefit for communities of color.

We urge you to support the Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act (S. 1873 / H.R. 1946). This bill is an actionable step that Congress can take to improve the quality and equity of cancer care for all populations.

Sincerely,

National Minority Quality Forum

Alliance for Aging Research  
American Muslim Health Professionals  
Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC)  
Cancer Support Community  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
HealthyWomen  
The Latino Coalition  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Grange  
National Hispanic Council on Aging  
Prevent Cancer Foundation

CC: Rep. Terri Sewell  
Rep. Jodey Arrington  
Rep. Raul Ruiz  
Rep. Richard Hudson  
Sen. Michael Bennet  
Sen. Tim Scott  
Sen. Ben Cardin  
Rep. Joyce Beatty  
Rep. Judy Chu