

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 37

WHEREAS, cancer is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the State of Missouri and throughout the Nation; and

WHEREAS, cancer is disproportionately a disease of the elderly, with more than half of all cancer diagnoses occurring in persons 65 years of age or older who are thus dependent on the federal Medicare program for provision of cancer care; and

WHEREAS, since treatment with anti-cancer drugs is the cornerstone of modern cancer care, elderly cancer patients must have access to potentially life-extending drug therapy, but the Medicare program's coverage of drugs is limited to injectable drugs or oral drugs that have an injectable version; and

WHEREAS, the Nation's investment in biomedical research has begun to bear fruit with a compelling array of new oral anti-cancer drugs that are less toxic, more effective, and more cost-effective than existing therapies, but because such drugs do not have an injectable equivalent, they are not covered by Medicare; and

WHEREAS, noncoverage of these important new products leaves many Medicare beneficiaries confronting the choice of either substantial out-of-pocket personal costs or selection of more toxic, less effective treatments that are covered by the program; and

WHEREAS, Medicare's failure to cover oral anti-cancer drugs leaves at risk many beneficiaries suffering from blood-related cancers like leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma, as well as cancers of the breast, lung, and prostate; and

WHEREAS, certain members of the United States Congress have recognized the necessity of Medicare coverage for all oral anti-cancer drugs and introduced legislation in the 107th Congress to achieve such result (H.R. 1624 and S. 913):

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Senate of the Ninety-first General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, respectfully urge the United States Congress to adopt legislation requiring the Medicare program to cover all oral anti-cancer drugs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Missouri Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the President of the United States, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and each member of the Missouri Congressional Delegation.