

Floor Statement

H. Res. 261

Thank you, Chairman Deal.

I rise today in support of H. Res. 261. This bipartisan resolution commends the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for implementing the Medicare demonstration project to assess the quality of care of cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. It calls on CMS to extend the project through 2006. I am pleased that 32 Members from both sides of the aisle joined me as cosponsors of this important resolution.

Delivering cancer treatment involves more than simply providing chemotherapy drugs. Oncologists need to plan drug regimens, educate caregivers, and monitor patient symptoms. They are responsible for managing pain, minimizing nausea, and limiting fatigue.

The demonstration project was critically important to protecting quality cancer care in 2005. It provided resources to assess the patient experience with chemotherapy side effects, including pain, nausea, and fatigue. The project has achieved three important objectives: collecting data to improve the quality of cancer care, maintaining stability in the cancer care delivery system, and focusing limited resources in an aspect of cancer treatment most difficult for patients.

Oncologists in America are the lifeline to so many individuals facing the greatest challenge of their lives. Hearing a diagnosis of cancer is a frightening and lonely experience, and the men and women who devote their careers to fighting this disease are the healers these patients look to for help. As a nation, we need to do all we can to support oncologists.

I would like to thank the American Society of Clinical Oncology for working so closely with me on this resolution, and I would like

to commend Chairman Deal, Chairman Barton, and the Energy and Commerce Committee staff for working with my office to bring this resolution to the Floor today.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.