June 1, 2017

Senator Bill Rabon
North Carolina Senate
16 W Jones Street, Room 2010
Raleigh, NC 27601-2808

Dear Senator Rabon,

The American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the North Carolina Oncology Association (NCOA) strongly urge the North Carolina Senate to enact North Carolina House bill 206. H 206 would help address the unacceptable barriers to cancer care that occur when undue cost sharing requirements are imposed upon individuals for oral anticancer drugs.

ASCO is the world’s leading professional society representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With more than 42,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that cancer patients have meaningful access to high quality cancer care. NCOA represents the common interests of oncologists and oncology-focused health care professionals treating cancer in North Carolina. NCOA’s mission is to promote the highest professional standards of oncology as well as to study, research and exchange information, experiences, and ideas leading to improvement in oncology.

Due to scientific advances, treatment with oral and other self-administered anticancer drugs is often more effective and less burdensome to the patient than intravenously administered forms of cancer medications that require treatment in the hospital or clinic. In some instances, oral drugs may represent the only or best treatment option. Today, however, some health plans impose significantly higher cost sharing requirements (copayments, coinsurance, etc.) on cancer patients for oral drugs than for intravenous or injected drugs. The cost sharing burdens imposed on patients for oral cancer drugs can create insurmountable financial barriers to optimal treatment even as some of these treatments may have the potential to lower the overall cost of care.

This is not about convenience for cancer patients or medical oncologists. Ensuring that cancer patients have meaningful access to oral cancer drugs is an issue of critical clinical importance. Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have enacted similar laws, and with your help, North Carolina can be the next state to take this important step. If you have questions or would like assistance from ASCO on any issue involving the care of individuals with cancer, please do not hesitate to contact Katherine Flannigan at Katherine.Flannigan@asco.org.
Sincerely,

Daniel F. Hayes, MD, FACP, FASCO
President
American Society of Clinical Oncology

North Carolina Oncology Association
Board of Directors