

Dear (Your Colorado Senator),

As a healthcare professional who cares for cancer patients, I want to express my opposition to SB21-175 as it is currently written. Those of us who care for cancer patients absolutely support reducing the financial burden on our patients, including medication costs. This bill although well intended, may result in decreased access to lifesaving medications, and default to the use of less effective and more toxic alternatives.

We have seen a 29% decrease in cancer deaths in the last 26 years. Much of that decrease has been a result of new and innovative cancer treatments. Many of these new medications are more expensive than older treatments, but save costs in decreased toxicity management and hospitalization. Many of these newer medications can be delivered in the outpatient setting, rather than requiring or resulting in hospitalization with its costs.

Cures for advanced malignant melanoma have increased dramatically with immune therapy and targeted therapy approaches. Survival for advanced lung cancer has increased from less than one year with older chemotherapy approaches to between three and five years with immunotherapy drugs. We can provide many more examples of recent advances that have contributed to the improvement in the lives of individuals with cancer.

The burden of this legislation appears to fall disproportionately on providers. It basically transfers the problem to the providers. Providers may not be able to obtain these medications if the upper payment limit is less than the price at which the drug is offered. Another unintended consequence may be forcing providers, particularly those independent providers in rural and underserved parts of the state out of business. This will leave the most vulnerable segments of our population without access to the care they need. Reduction in medication costs is intended to "level the playing field" in terms of access to medications, but it may result in leveling the playing field by making them unavailable to all.

I respectfully ask that you vote no on SB21-175.