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Energy and Commerce, Member Hearing Day

Written Testimony of Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz

September 18, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement for the record for the Energy and Commerce Committee's Member Hearing Day. Please find three pieces of legislation which I urge the Committee to review and consider making a priority for the 118th Congress.

1. Reducing Hereditary Cancer Act (H.R.1526)

Under current law, Medicare covers genetic testing only for beneficiaries *already diagnosed with cancer*, regardless of family cancer history or a known genetic mutation in the family. This is a problem because knowledge of an inherited mutation can be lifesaving for an individual and their family members as it guides decisions regarding cancer screening and prevention.

The Reducing Hereditary Cancer Act (H.R. 1526) is a bipartisan, bicameral bill, led by me, Reps. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, Elissa Slotkin, and Larry Bucshon in the House, and Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Ben Cardin in the Senate. This legislation aims to address gaps in Medicare coverage so individuals at high risk of cancer have access to these crucial services.

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This legislation amends Medicare to require:

1. Coverage of guideline-recommended genetic testing for inherited mutations known to significantly increase cancer risk in two Medicare populations:
 - a. (i) those with a known hereditary cancer mutation in their family, and
 - b. (ii) those with a personal or family history suspicious for hereditary cancer.
2. Coverage of appropriate follow-up services for Medicare beneficiaries who have an inherited mutation causing an increased risk of cancer:
 - a. increased cancer screening (e.g. breast MRIs, more frequent colonoscopies) and
 - b. risk-reducing surgeries (e.g. removal of ovaries and fallopian tubes).

These services are covered for Americans with private insurance and Medicaid, but unfortunately not Medicare. Lack of access to these lifesaving services exacerbate health disparities and adversely affect Medicare beneficiaries, Medicare, and the U.S. healthcare system as a whole.

With access to more early detection, individuals would detect cancer earlier when it is more easily treated, better understand their personal cancer risks for multiple cancers, make informed decisions about the type and frequency of cancer screenings, and inform family members about their potential cancer risks.

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2. Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act

There are more than 18 million cancer survivors in the United States, and 26 million are expected by 2040. Significant advancements in early detection, preventive care, and treatment of many cancers have resulted in a rapidly growing community of those living with, through, and beyond a diagnosis.

The Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act (CCSA) (H.R.4363), led by me, Reps., Brian Fitzpatrick, and Mark DeSaulnier, and Senators Amy Klobuchar and Ben Cardin, is a landmark piece of legislation that aims to provide a lifeline to survivors and their families by addressing the entire survivorship continuum of care for this deadly disease.

For every survivor, cancer will be a very different and personal experience. This legislation aims to set new standards for survivorship from diagnosis to end of life, ensuring the best and most seamless experience for survivors, and their families and caregivers, throughout their journey. The CCSA will address gaps in survivorship care and develop desperately needed standards to improve the overall patient-centered quality of care and navigation needs that cancer survivors and their families experience.

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To empower survivors with the best possible resources and care to overcome this terrible disease, the legislation addresses several pillars:

1. Care Planning and Transition: Provides a Medicare service and payment for care planning and coordination services to help improve coordination of care and transition to primary care, and consolidates treatments to guide survivorship monitoring and follow-up care;
2. Alternative Payment Model: Studies existing reimbursement landscape to develop an alternative payment model to ensure a coordinated approach to survivorship care across an episode of care;
3. Navigation: Develops effective and comprehensive navigation services that emphasize the continuum of care, such as follow-up and health disparities and determinants, like food insecurity, housing, transportation, labor, broadband and telehealth access, and childcare;
4. Quality of Care: Establishes grants to promote utilization of navigation, employment of risk-stratification, transition to primary care, utilization of care plans, potential use of at-home care, and better use of information technology for patient experience data;
5. Employment: Establishes employment assistance grants to help survivors, their families, and caregivers when faced with a range of workforce challenges; and
6. Education and Awareness: Creates resources for survivors and health professionals to promote early detection, preventive care and help providers provide high-quality services.

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The legislation also addresses issues such as the innovation and use of technology, fertility preservation, long-term studies, community resources for patients and providers, and provisions concerning childhood and adolescent cancer.

3. Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety (VGB) Reauthorization Act

Drownings and near-drownings in pools and spas pose a significant public health risk to our nation's children. Drowning is a public health crisis, and it remains the leading cause of unintentional death for children ages one to four. Further, drowning death rates for American Indian and Black individuals demonstrate high disparities that greatly affect these communities and their families. However, we are not powerless in addressing these tragedies, and strong education, awareness, and enforcement efforts can help make children safer around the water and save lives.

The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety (VGB) Reauthorization Act (H.R.5202), first authorized in 2008, is aimed at improving the safety of all pools and spas by increasing the layers of protection and promoting uninterrupted supervision to prevent child drowning and entrapment. The law has three principal elements:

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1. First, it continues to require every public pool in the US to install safe drain covers that prevent suction entrapment.
2. Second, it continues a grant program to provide critical support for local officials to educate communities about drowning and entrapment dangers.
3. Third, it continues “Pool Safely,” a national public education campaign to raise awareness about drowning prevention

The VGB Reauthorization Act will continue to carry out these primary functions in the tradition built on over a decade’s worth of expertise in proper execution of the programs. The VGB Reauthorization Act extends grant program eligibility to non-profit organizations to expand the reach to even more communities and families. It also creates a grant awareness campaign to increase participation across the country. Further, the bill increases relevant staffing at the CPSC, and incorporates provisions concerning oversight and reporting to continue to learn how to improve the programs in the future.

Keeping the VGB Grant Program and the “Pool Safely” campaign active and robust has had a strong and lasting impact on our communities by preventing drownings and near-drownings. As such, it is necessary to amend and reauthorize this program to ensure it continues to benefit our communities as intended. With this reauthorization, we will ensure that the infrastructure,

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resources, commitment, and robustness of the program reflects the seriousness of this public health issue.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Wasserman Schultz".

Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Member of Congress

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