



December 3, 2019

Governor Brian P. Kemp
206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Governor Kemp,

The Georgia Society of Clinical Oncology (GASCO) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the 1115 waiver proposed earlier this month. We are encouraged at overall progress toward more covered Georgians and congratulate the state on its existing programs for patients with cancer. However, we are concerned the proposed waiver would extend coverage to only 89,000 of the nearly 1.5 million uninsured Georgians. This proposal does not compare favorably to existing alternatives and is not the best solution for Georgia's citizens.

GASCO's primary mission is to promote the highest professional standards of oncology practice in the state of Georgia; to study, research and exchange information, leading to improvement in the practice of hematology; to support and further oncology education; and to monitor and respond to appropriate legislative and regulatory concerns of the membership. ASCO is the national organization representing more than 45,000 physicians and other health care professionals specializing in cancer treatment, diagnosis, and prevention. ASCO members are also dedicated to conducting research that leads to improved patient outcomes, and we are committed to ensuring that evidence-based practices for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer are available to all Americans.

According to ASCO's 2014 [Policy Statement on Medicaid Reform](#), people with cancer, for whom the costs of evaluation and treatment can be high, are particularly in need of insurance coverage to allow for timely diagnosis and high-quality treatment. As such, we urge your administration to consider alternatives that can lead to greater coverage, better health outcomes and less cost-shifting to an already strained health care delivery system. Improved access to health insurance would provide earlier detection, offer more timely access to treatment, result in lower cost of care — and dramatically improve survivability of a cancer diagnosis.

We strongly support Georgia's existing 'Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Program' aimed at helping uninsured Georgians, and we urge continued investment in this successful initiative. We recommend the state extend eligibility to a wider age range and include other cancers so that more Georgians can benefit.

In August 2018, ASCO released a [position statement](#) on Medicaid waivers and their impact on cancer care. We emphasize the importance of patients not being faced with delays or barriers to treatment and find that disruptions to care are linked to worse cancer outcomes. Moreover, cancer is an unexpected and life-altering event, and research has shown that those in active treatment for cancer [often stop working](#) entirely or dramatically reduce the number of hours worked, not at all by choice. This population may be impacted by the "work requirement." We would like to work with your office to mitigate this dynamic and better understand what may qualify in terms of exemptions. We note that many rural Georgians count on non-emergency medical transportation to make their appointments;

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eliminating or eroding this coverage could jeopardize a critical element of support for many of the state's most vulnerable citizens.

GASCO and ASCO appreciate the consequential and thoughtful investment that your new administration has made in assessing the specific challenges faced by Georgia's healthcare system and uninsured population. However, the current proposal leaves far too many Georgians out and could disproportionately jeopardize patients with cancer. We hope you will turn to our organizations as a resource for cancer care and research and we look forward to working with you to achieve high value, high quality care for all Georgians. If you would like more information or have any questions, please contact Karen Beard at karen.beard@gasco.us or Aaron Segel at aaron.segel@asco.org.

Sincerely,



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President
Georgia Society of Clinical Oncology



Dr. Howard "Skip" Burris, MD, FASCO
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