



American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
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September 22, 2011

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2305

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

On behalf of millions of cancer patients, survivors and their families, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) commends you for your leadership in introducing S. 296, the Preserving Access to Life-Saving Medications Act of 2011. The current shortage of numerous cancer drugs is touching the lives of cancer patients every day and we stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to identify solutions to this critical problem. The availability of cancer drugs can mean the difference between life and death for many cancer patients.

It is clear that there are many different factors contributing to the shortage of specific drugs including inadequate supply of raw materials, insufficient manufacturing capacity, as well as a myriad of economic factors that cause companies to discontinue manufacturing certain product lines. It is a long-term cyclical problem that repeats itself every several years, as well as an immediate problem that warrants mitigating action. We believe S. 296 would take an important first step in addressing these critical issues.

Advanced notification to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from industry about potential suspension of drug production, interruption in manufacturing, or other production adjustments that might lead to a shortage would put the FDA in a better position to track and manage potential drug shortages. Notification would also allow government, industry, providers and the public to more systematically analyze and understand the causes of specific drug shortages as they occur and develop appropriate real time solutions that are also needed to address the ongoing acute problem that cancer patients are living with daily.

We look forward to the General Accounting Office (GAO) examination of the issue that is expected to be released in the near future. We also welcome your efforts to discuss solutions with the industry and other stakeholders, and would be pleased to help represent the views and experiences of cancer patients who are now facing interruptions in their standard of care due to the shortage of chemotherapy drugs.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important public health issue. Please let us know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher W. Hansen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a distinct "H".

Christopher W. Hansen
President