



February 23, 2022

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
United States Senator  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Senator Manchin,

The West Virginia Oncology Society (WVOS) is the largest oncology professional organization in the state, representing a powerful community of oncologists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, and other healthcare providers involved in the treatment of patients with cancer. The multidisciplinary nature of our membership uniquely positions WVOS to engage with policymakers about the need to lower out-of-pocket costs for drugs administered in oncology practices, clinics, and hospitals.

**WVOS supports the goal of reducing the cost of prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries. However, we are concerned that the maximum fair price standard proposed for achieving cost savings in the Build Back Better Act (BBBA) would negatively impact both cancer care providers that administer drugs covered under Medicare Part B and their patients, with a disproportionate effect on beneficiaries in rural and underserved communities. We therefore urge you to withhold your support of future versions of this legislation unless providers are held harmless in the proposed drug pricing negotiation between the federal government and drug manufacturers.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the state of West Virginia had the third highest rate of cancer deaths and fourth highest rate of new cancers in the United States in 2018. Our state also had the highest rate of new uterine and oral cavity/pharyngeal cancers compared to the rest of the country. We are concerned that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has delayed care for many patients across the state, and patients are presenting with later stage cancers than they had prior. In this environment, we cannot allow changes in drug reimbursement to further impact patient access to care.

The current level of reimbursement for Medicare Part B drugs allows community providers to finance the various parts of a comprehensive cancer care program. This not only includes the cost of overhead, but the ability to invest in new and innovative technologies, patient care coordination and supportive care services, and adequate staffing structures for care delivery. By reducing reimbursement for Medicare Part B drugs, we believe that the drug pricing provisions of the BBBA would worsen the financial challenges that many community cancer programs are facing and limit their ability to provide high quality care.

Moreover, we are concerned that reductions in drug reimbursement would exacerbate existing health inequities in cancer care delivery. Oncology programs and practices in the small and rural communities we serve stand to be most severely affected by these reimbursement cuts, potentially facing the difficult decision to reduce available treatment options or even close their doors as a result. This would create new access issues for Medicare beneficiaries, with a disproportionate effect on older populations in rural and underserved areas as well as the poor, vulnerable, and people of color.

We realize that you are not in support of the current version of the BBBA. However, as the Senate Democratic Caucus continues to examine the potential for a smaller spending package and other bipartisan legislation, we believe this issue warrants your attention. **In consideration of the concerns outlined above, WVOS encourages you to withhold your support of any piece of drug pricing legislation unless providers are removed from the middle of drug pricing negotiations between the federal government and drug manufacturers.**

If you have any questions about our letter or would like to discuss in further detail, please contact Matt Devino at [mdevino@acc-cancer.org](mailto:mdevino@acc-cancer.org) or (301) 263-3510.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ghulam Abbas".

Ghulam Abbas, MD, MHCM, FACS  
President, West Virginia Oncology Society