



To: Maryland House Health Committee
From: Oncology Nursing Society
Date: February 5, 2026
RE: Support HB 393 – Ensure Cancer Patient Access to Scalp Cooling Treatments

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) and the more than 730 oncology nurse members in the state of Maryland, we would like to express our strong support for HB 393, which would require coverage for scalp cooling treatment for patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Scalp cooling—also known as cryotherapy, “cold caps,” or scalp-cooling systems—is an evidence-based therapy used during chemotherapy infusions to reduce the risk of chemotherapy-induced alopecia (CIA), or hair-loss. Scalp cooling works by vasoconstriction, which minimizes the amount of chemotherapy reaching the hair follicles. It is administered before, during, and after chemotherapy infusions. The American Medical Association (AMA) recently adopted a resolution urging insurers to cover scalp-cooling therapy as medically necessary supportive care.

Oncology nurses witness firsthand the profound emotional, physical, and psychological toll that a cancer diagnosis and treatment can take on a person, including the daunting prospect of CIA. Hair loss is one of the most visible and distressing side effects of cancer treatment, and can lead to patients selecting a less effective treatment to retain their hair or even refusal of treatment. For many patients, it represents the moment when their illness becomes public. Preserving hair can improve treatment adherence, reduce anxiety, depression, and stigma, support quality of life and a sense of normalcy, and strengthen patient empowerment during an already overwhelming time.

Despite its importance, scalp cooling remains financially inaccessible for many, as out-of-pocket costs can reach thousands of dollars over a treatment course. Insurance coverage is essential to ensure equitable access to this standard-of-care option. Without coverage mandates, access remains determined by a patient’s financial resources rather than medical need.

HB 393 would ensure that patients do not have to choose between financial strain and maintaining their dignity during cancer treatment.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter and encourage the committee to advance HB 393. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss our support, please feel free to contact healthpolicy@ons.org

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ONS is a professional association that represents the over 100,000 oncology nurses in the United States and is the professional home to more than 35,000 members. ONS is committed to promoting excellence in oncology nursing and the transformation of cancer care. Since 1975, ONS has provided a professional community for oncology nurses, developed evidence-based education programs and treatment information, and advocated for patient care, all in an effort to improve the quality of life and outcomes for patients with cancer and their families.