

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 20

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2002 Regular Session
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By: **Senator Hollinger**

Introduced and read first time: February 25, 2002

Assigned to: Rules

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Medicare Coverage of Oral Cancer Drugs**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the Congress of the United States to adopt legislation
4 requiring the Medicare program to cover all oral anticancer drugs; directing that
5 this resolution be forwarded to certain persons; and generally relating to
6 Medicare coverage of oral cancer drugs.

7 WHEREAS, Cancer is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the State of
8 Maryland and throughout the nation; and

9 WHEREAS, Cancer is disproportionately a disease of the elderly, with more
10 than half of all cancer diagnoses occurring in individuals age 65 or older, who are thus
11 dependent on the federal Medicare program for provision of cancer care; and

12 WHEREAS, Treatment with anticancer drugs is the cornerstone of modern
13 cancer care, and elderly cancer patients must have access to potentially
14 life-extending drug therapy, but the Medicare program's coverage of drugs is limited
15 to injectable drugs or oral drugs that have an injectable version; and

16 WHEREAS, The nation's investment in biomedical research has begun to bear
17 fruit with a compelling array of new oral anticancer drugs that are less toxic, more
18 effective, and more cost-effective than existing therapies, but, because such drugs do
19 not have an injectable equivalent, they are not covered by Medicare; and

20 WHEREAS, Noncoverage of these important new products leaves many
21 Medicare beneficiaries confronting the choice of either substantial out-of-pocket
22 personal costs or the selection of more toxic, less effective treatments that are covered
23 by the program; and

24 WHEREAS, Medicare's failure to cover anticancer drugs leaves at risk many
25 beneficiaries suffering from blood-related cancers like leukemia, lymphoma, and
26 myeloma, as well as cancers of the breast, lung, and prostate; and

27 WHEREAS, Certain members of the United States Congress have recognized
28 the necessity of Medicare coverage for all oral anticancer drugs and introduced
29 legislation in the 107th Congress to achieve that result (H.R. 1624; S. 913); now,
30 therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
2 General Assembly of Maryland urges the Congress of the United States to adopt
3 legislation requiring the Medicare program to cover all oral anticancer drugs; and be
4 it further

5 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
6 Legislative Services to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States,
7 the Honorable Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Mr.
8 Thomas A. Scully, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services,
9 and the members of the United States Congress; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
11 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
12 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
13 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.