

Good morning, Chair Rogers, distinguished members of the House Health Policy Committee, fellow health care professionals, and distinguished guests, thank you for the opportunity to share the perspective of the Michigan State Medical Society and its members regarding House Bill 4071.

My name is Doctor Salim Siddiqui, I am a board-certified radiation oncologist and President of MSMS. On behalf of MSMS and myself, I speak in unwavering support for House Bill 4071, the oral chemotherapy fairness bill.

In our pursuit to provide the best possible care and the best possible outcomes for our patients, we must acknowledge the evolving landscape of cancer treatment. Oral chemotherapy pills have revolutionized how we administer lifesaving medications, offering convenience, flexibility, and an improved quality of life for countless individuals battling cancer, so they can continue to make memories with their loved ones. Yet, despite the proven efficacy and numerous benefits of such oral chemotherapy pills, disparities persist in the coverage and affordability of oral chemotherapy compared to intravenous treatments.

Imagine a patient who, after enduring a long and exhausting day at work, can return home and take their prescribed oral chemotherapy pill in the comfort of their own home. Freed from the need for frequent hospital visits, they can maintain their daily routines, continue contributing to their communities, and spend precious time with their loved ones making memories. For our patients facing the challenges of cancer daily, this level of empowerment and autonomy is invaluable.

However, the current disparities in insurance coverage place a heavy onerous financial burden on these patients and on their families. While intravenous chemotherapy is often covered by insurance plans, oral chemotherapy pills are frequently subjected to higher out of pocket costs, forcing many of our patients to make the difficult choices between their health and their financial stability. This is unjust. Such an unjust discrepancy in coverage limits patient's access to potentially lifesaving treatments and exacerbates the already immense emotional and physical toll of cancer on our patients and their loved ones.

House Bill 4071 presents a crucial opportunity to rectify these disparities and ensure that all of our patients have equal access to the most appropriate treatment options prescribed by their physicians at the right time in their care. By enacting oral chemotherapy fairness, not only do we protect the sacred physician-patient relationship, but also we can alleviate the undue financial burdens faced by our patients, enhance our patient outcomes, and improve overall health care utilization. Patients who can seamlessly transition to oral chemotherapy are more likely to adhere to their treatment regimens, resulting in better control of their disease, reduced hospitalizations, and potentially lower health care costs in the long run.

House Bill 4071 is a critical step towards achieving equitable health care for all cancer patients. By eliminating the unjust barriers associated with oral chemotherapy, we can empower patients, improve treatment outcomes, and allow our patients to continue to make memories with their loved ones. While you are free not to, I urge you to consider the immense positive impact of this bill on the lives of countless individuals and support its passage.

Together, let us ensure that every patient, regardless of their treatment modality, has the opportunity to fight cancer with dignity, hope, and equal access to the most effective treatments available, so they can continue to make memories with their loved ones.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm happy to answer your questions.