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TENTH NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS
SENATOR BOB DOLE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
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IT IS A GREAT HONOR TO RECEIVE THE TENTH NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD OF THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS.

WHILE CANCER RANKS SECOND AMONG THE MAJOR CAUSES OF DEATH IN
THE UNITED STATES TODAY, SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS AGAINST THE DISEASE
HAS BEEN MADE. RECENT DATA FROM THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE
SHOW FOR 1950 TO 1979 A DECREASE IN THE DEATH RATE FOR ALL
CANCERS OTHER THAN LUNG FOR ALL GROUPS BUT NON-WHITE MALES.

SINCE 85 PERCENT OF ALL CANCER CARE IS MANAGED IN COMMUNITY
HOSPITALS, COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS HAVE PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN
THESE CANCER DEATH REDUCTIONS.

ATTAINING EXCELLENCE IN CANCER CARE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL
WAS A GOAL SET OUT BY THE NATIONAL CANCER ACT OF 1971. SINCE
THAT TIME, COMMUNITY HOSPITALS HAVE RAPIDLY ADDED CANCER RELATED
FACILITIES AND STAFFS. NO LONGER IS THERE A NEED FOR CANCER
PATIENTS TO TRAVEL TO DISTANT ACADEMIC CENTERS FOR STATE-OF-THE-
ART CARE; IT IS NOW AVAILABLE AT HOME.

THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS, THROUGH THE WORK OF ITS MEMBERS (LIKE JACK TRAVIS OF TOPEKA WHO IS ON YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES), HAVE MADE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO ASSURING THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND CARE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

PATIENTS ARE HAPPY WITH THIS PROGRAM. THEY CAN RECEIVE CARE CLOSE TO HOME AND THEIR FAMILIES, IN HEALTH FACILITIES IN WHICH THEY ARE COMFORTABLE.

RURAL DWELLERS AND THOSE LIVING IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS HAVE BEEN MOST AFFECTED BY THE COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS. NO AMERICAN IS MORE THAN ONE DAY'S DRIVE FROM A CENTER.

I HAVE BEEN WORKING TO MAKE SURE THAT COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEMONSTRATION OF THE BEST METHODS OF TREATMENT OF PATIENTS WITH CANCER.

UNDER THE PROSPECTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM RECENTLY ADOPTED, COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS WERE NOT PROVIDED A SPECIFIC ADJUSTMENT TO THEIR DRG RATES TO ACCOMODATE THE HIGHER COST OF TREATING THE VERY ILL CANCER PATIENT.

ALTHOUGH CONGRESS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED HOSPITALS EXTENSIVELY ENGAGED IN CANCER TREATMENT AND RESEARCH AS A CLASS FOR WHICH AN ADJUSTMENT MIGHT BE PROVIDED TO THE PROSPECTIVE PAYMENT RATES, THE HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION INTERPRETED THIS EXCEPTION NARROWLY. ONLY A FEW LARGE INSTITUTIONS WERE ALLOWED A DRG ADJUSTMENT.

I BELIEVE THAT AN ADJUSTMENT MAY WELL BE NECESSARY FOR COMMUNITY HOSPITALS PARTICIPATING IN ADVANCED CANCER TREATMENT. I HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION TO EXPRESS THIS VIEW, AND WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TO GAIN THAT ADJUSTMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS. ON MONDAY I WILL REQUEST THAT THE SECRETARY CONVENE A MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH AND OTHER APPROPRIATE AGENCIES. I HAVE ALSO ASKED THAT THE SECRETARY INVITE LEADERS FROM THE MAJOR LAY, PROFESSIONAL AND ADVISORY (SUCH AS THE NATIONAL CANCER ADVISORY BOARD) ORGANIZATIONS. I BELIEVE THAT OUR CONCERNS CAN BE SYSTEMATICALLY ADDRESSED AND IF NECESSARY, A STRATEGY FOR SYSTEMATIC DATA COLLECTION TO ASSIST IN A RESOLUTION OF THIS MATTER SHOULD BE DEVELOPED.

AS IT STANDS NOW, IF ONLY A FEW LARGE INSTITUTIONS GET AN ADJUSTMENT I AM CONCERNED THAT RELATIVELY FEW CANCER PATIENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY BASED CARE. RESEARCH RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE WILL NO LONGER BE WIDELY DISSEMINATED, AND FEWER PATIENTS WILL BENEFIT FROM THEIR APPLICATION.

SINCE THE PASSAGE OF THE NATIONAL CANCER ACT OF 1971, THE INTENT OF CONGRESS HAS BEEN TO DISSEMINATE THE LATEST CANCER TREATMENT TO COMMUNITIES. I INTEND TO CONTINUE TO SEE THAT THIS CONGRESSIONAL INTENT IS CARRIED OUT THROUGH WHAT HAS PROVEN TO BE A MOST EFFECTIVE VEHICLE, THE COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE US WITH THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO IDENTIFY THE LEGITIMATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COSTS OF HOSPITALS CARING FOR PATIENTS UNDER NCI PROTOCOLS AND THOSE WHO DO NOT.

AGAIN, LET ME THANK YOU FOR YOUR THOUGHTFULNESS IN PROVIDING ME WITH THIS VERY IMPORTANT AWARD.