



Alaska's Oral Anticancer Treatment Access Law: What Clinicians Need to Know



Outdated coverage policies in Alaska USED TO limit cancer patients' access to lifesaving drugs!

Traditionally, IV chemotherapy treatments are covered under a health plan's medical benefit where the patient is required to pay an office visit copay, usually between \$20 and \$30. Conversely, oral anticancer medications are covered under a health plan's prescription benefit and, many times, patients are responsible for extremely high and unmanageable copays, creating an enormous barrier for patients to access orally administered drugs. According to a recent study published in the Journal of Oncology Practice and American Journal of Managed Care, 10% of cancer patients failed to fill their initial prescriptions for oral anticancer medications due to high out-of-pocket costs.

Legislative Solution

In an effort to remove barriers to accessing lifesaving treatments for cancer patients, Alaska enacted legislation, effective January 1, 2016, that directs health benefit plans that provide coverage for cancer chemotherapy treatment to extend coverage for orally administered anticancer medication at a cost equal to the cost of intravenously administered or injected anticancer medications. **To view Alaska's oral parity law, please see next page.**

What Does This Mean for Patients?

If a patient is *privately insured (the law does not apply to Medicare)*, and their plan covers chemotherapy, an FDA-approved, orally administered drug should have the same out-of-pocket costs for the patient as an intravenously administered drug.

What to do if an insurance plan does not comply & to find out if the law applies to your health plan:

You can file a complaint with the Alaska Department of Insurance Consumer Affairs Division at <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ins/Consumers/FileaConsumerComplaint.aspx> or call 1-800-467-8725. For information about our oral parity work in Washington, DC, please go to: peac.myeloma.org.



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IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION
BY THE SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Amended: 3/2/16

Offered: 2/17/16

Sponsor(s): SENATORS GIESSEL, Ellis, Wielechowski, Costello, Coghill, Micciche, Bishop, Egan, MacKinnon, Gardner, Kelly

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to insurance coverage for anti-cancer medications."

2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

3 * Section 1. AS 21.42 is amended by adding a new section to read:

4 Sec. 21.42.430. Coverage for anti-cancer medication. (a) Except for a

5 fraternal benefit society, a health care insurer that offers, issues for delivery,
delivers,

6 or renews in this state a health care insurance plan that provides coverage for anti-

7 cancer medications that are injected or intravenously administered by a health
care

8 provider and patient-administered anti-cancer medications, including those orally

9 administered or self-injected, may not require a higher copayment, deductible, or

10 coinsurance amount for a patient-administered medication than it requires for an
anti-

11 cancer medication injected or intravenously administered by a health care
provider,

12 regardless of the formulation or benefit category determination by the policy or
plan.

13 (b) A health care insurer may not offset the costs of compliance with (a) of

14 this section by

15 (1) increasing the copayment, deductible, or coinsurance amount

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1 required for anti-cancer medications injected or intravenously administered by a
health

2 care provider that are covered under the health insurance plan; or

3 (2) reclassifying benefits with respect to anti-cancer medications.



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4 (c) Nothing in this section prohibits a health care insurance plan from
5 requiring different cost-sharing rates for in-network and out-of-network providers
or
6 pharmacies.

7 (d) In this section, "anti-cancer medication" means a drug or biologic used to
8 kill cancerous cells, to slow or prevent the growth of cancerous cells, or to treat
related
9 side effects.

10 * Sec. 2. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new
section to
11 read:

12 **APPLICABILITY.** AS 21.42.430, enacted by sec. 1 of this Act, applies to a health
13 insurance policy that is offered, issued for delivery, delivered, or renewed on or
after the
14 effective date of this Act.