



Bozeman Deaconess  
CANCER CENTER

Annie Castillo, M.D.  
Board Certified in  
Internal Medicine  
Medical Oncology

February 9, 2009

EXHIBIT 3 AWT  
DATE 2-16-09  
HB 409

Jack Hensold, M.D.  
Board Certified in  
Internal Medicine  
Medical Oncology  
Hematology

Dear Ms. Pomnichowski:

David Koeplin, M.D.  
Board Certified in  
Radiation Oncology

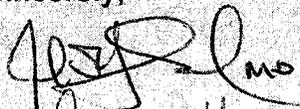
We strongly support your efforts on behalf of *House Bill 409*, which will help create a cancer drug repository. These are exciting times for those of us who are engaged in the care of patients with cancer. An understanding of the causes of cancer has resulted in the availability of a new class of drugs that target the mechanisms responsible for cancer. Additional, new therapies target the interactions between cancer cells and the host. These therapies have increased cure rates and prolonged survival of patients who, as of yet, cannot be cured. In addition, new supportive therapies have significantly reduced the toxicities associated with standard chemotherapies and have substantially improved the quality of life, for nearly all cancer patients.

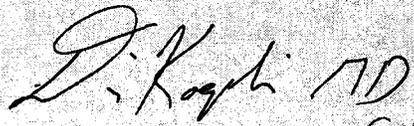
Rebecca Kane, N.P.  
Nurse Practitioner

However, these advances have come at the large financial cost of drug development. New cancer therapies are, without exception, very expensive, ranging from \$3,000 - \$9,000 in monthly costs. Since nearly all the oral chemotherapies are subject to "co pays," all patients, independent of their insurance coverage, are placed at significant financial risk when diagnosed with cancer. For example, a Medicare patient will hit the "donut hole" in their coverage within the first month of treatment and will be liable for a \$5,000 payment for their drug.

For patients on fixed incomes, this creates a significant financial burden. Often patients have to make a decision about treating their disease or meeting daily needs. Patients sometimes decide they simply cannot afford the drugs that might save their life. Thus, despite advances in therapy, new difficulties have arisen in ensuring that all patients have access to the best available care. While *House Bill 409* does not address all the problems that currently plague health care delivery, it will help to ensure that patients have access to the best available therapies, regardless of their ability to pay. We greatly appreciate your efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,

  
Wendy Swinner, LSW  
Annie S. Castillo  
Rebecca Kane

  
David Koeplin MD  
Cp Man BS RT(RT)  
Wendy Swinner, LSW  
Polly Buckel for her