



Facing Hereditary Cancer EMPOWERED



ISSUE BRIEF

Support the Reducing Hereditary Cancer Act (H.R.4752 / S.2760)

Provide Medicare Beneficiaries at Risk of Hereditary Cancers with Access to Crucial Screening and Preventive Services

Medicare was not designed to cover preventive health services. Recognizing the benefits of cancer prevention and early detection, Congress has enabled coverage of cancer screening services such as mammograms and colonoscopies. Unfortunately, critical testing, screening, and preventive interventions for people at increased risk of hereditary cancers are still not covered by Medicare. Genetic testing for a hereditary predisposition to cancer is widely recognized as medically necessary for individuals with certain personal or family histories of the disease. Knowledge of an inherited genetic mutation (i.e., BRCA1, BRCA2 or the genes associated with Lynch syndrome) can be lifesaving for an individual and their family members.

Knowledge of a Hereditary Cancer Mutation Can Help Individuals and Their Families...

- Better understand their personal and family members' risks for multiple cancers
- Adhere to national medical guidelines, making informed decisions about the type and frequency of screenings
- Detect cancer earlier when it is more easily treated
- Undergo recommended surgical interventions to significantly reduce the risk of certain cancers
- Determine the best, most effective treatment if they are diagnosed with cancer
- Qualify for participation in research or clinical trials

Medicare Patients Face Barriers to Genetic Testing and Appropriate Preventive Care

Medicare covers genetic testing only for beneficiaries *already diagnosed with cancer*. If an individual is already known to have an inherited mutation that increases cancer risk, the medically necessary "supplemental" cancer screenings or risk-reducing interventions are not covered.

Private insurers and Medicaid cover genetic testing for hereditary cancer risk and the downstream, guideline-recommended screening and preventive services. Medicare beneficiaries should also have access to these services.

The Reducing Hereditary Cancer Act

This legislation aims to modify the Medicare statutes to remedy this coverage issue. As recommended by expert medical guidelines:

- It will enable coverage of genetic testing for inherited mutations that significantly increase cancer risk in Medicare beneficiaries with a known hereditary cancer mutation in their family and those with a personal or family history suspicious of hereditary cancer.
- For those with an identified mutation, it would facilitate access to increased cancer screening and risk-reducing surgeries as recommended (e.g., removal of ovaries and fallopian tubes).

This bill will reduce barriers to genetic testing and guide cancer prevention strategies while saving money. Prevention and early detection are far less costly than treatment. An independent economic analysis shows that **Medicare will save \$230 million a year** if H.R. 4762/S. 2760 is implemented.

Please cosponsor H.R. 4762/S. 2760 to ensure Medicare beneficiaries have access to medically necessary cancer-related genetic, screening and preventive services.