

REDUCING HEREDITARY CANCER ACT

Providing access to genetic counseling, testing, related cancer screening and preventive services for Medicare beneficiaries with a personal or family history of hereditary cancer.

Background

Medicare is not permitted to cover preventive health services unless explicitly authorized by Congress. Recognizing the benefits of cancer prevention and early detection, Congress has passed legislation allowing for coverage of cancer screening services such as mammograms, colonoscopies, and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests. Unfortunately, critical testing, screening, and risk reducing interventions for people at risk for hereditary cancers is 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 mutation (i.e. BRCA1, BRCA2 or the genes associated with Lynch syndrome) can be life-saving for an individual and their family members.

The Problem

Medicare covers genetic testing only for beneficiaries already diagnosed with cancer. If a physician recommends testing based on family history it will be denied if the person has not yet been diagnosed with cancer. Even if an individual is already known to carry an inherited mutation that increases cancer risk, the related medically necessary high-risk cancer screenings or risk-reducing interventions will not be covered.

The Solution

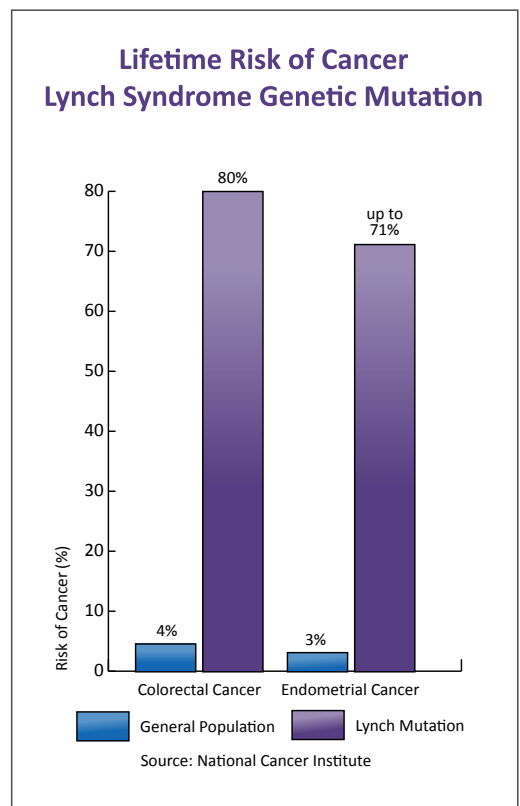
With co-leadership from Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), the Reducing Hereditary Cancer Act aims to modify the Medicare statutes to remedy this issue. As recommended by expert medical guidelines¹, it will enable coverage of:

- Genetic testing for inherited mutations known to significantly increase cancer risk in two Medicare populations: those with a known hereditary cancer mutation in their family as well as those with a personal or family history suspicious for hereditary cancer

And for those with an identified increased risk it would cover:

- Increased cancer screening as recommended
- Risk-reducing surgeries as recommended (e.g. removal of ovaries and fallopian tubes)

Medicare beneficiaries deserve the same standard of care as individuals with private health insurance. This legislation will reduce health disparities while saving lives and money. Please consider co-sponsoring the Reducing Hereditary Cancer Act to support access to medically appropriate cancer prevention and early detection under Medicare.



**For more
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¹ National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology – Genetic/Familial High-Risk Assessment: Breast, Ovarian, and Pancreatic and Genetic/Familial High-Risk Assessment: Colorectal