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February 23, 2012

Senate Committee Commerce and Consumer Protection
Senator Roz Baker, Chair
Senator Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair

Hearing:

State Capitol Room 229
February 24, 2012, 9:00 a.m.

SB 2087, SD1 - Relating to Health

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of SB 2087, SD1, which limits out-of-pocket costs for cancer medications, including nongeneric oral chemotherapy, under health insurance plans.

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service. Our mission is to advocate on behalf of those who are touched by cancer.

Oral chemotherapy medication is an alternative to the traditional inpatient procedure of receiving chemotherapy intravenously. To be treated with an intravenous medication, a cancer patient might have to undergo an otherwise unnecessary surgical procedure to install a port in their chest through which the drug would be delivered directly into the bloodstream. The patient would then be issued a "pump" to carry in a fanny pack twenty-four hours a day. The intravenous drug would require more trips to a medical facility, requiring extensive travel and time away from work. Neighbor island cancer patients have the most difficulty since they may have to travel to different islands to receive treatment. Thus, oral chemotherapy is an effective way for cancer patients to receive life-saving cancer treatment without the need for invasive procedures and an inpatient visit.

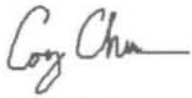
The purpose of this measure is to clarify that the costs associated with oral and intravenous chemotherapy procedures continue to be affordable to cancer patients. Under current statute, the costs for oral chemotherapy cannot be more than the costs for intravenous chemotherapy medications. The purpose was to reduce the out-of-pocket costs for oral chemotherapy

medications, which were considered prescriptions and covered under a different insurance benefit. What has happened, however, is that instead of lowering the costs associated with oral chemotherapy medications, insurers have the ability to raise the intravenous chemotherapy costs to the same level as oral chemotherapy medications.

We are in support of the amendments made by the Health Committee.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Chun". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cory Chun
Government Relations Director