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July 21, 2011

Hawaii Members of the US House of Representatives
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives:

The Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology (HSCO) represents 87 oncology professionals including medical oncologists, surgeons and other members of the cancer care team who provide care to patients battling cancer across Hawaii. We appreciate how difficult it must be to come to an acceptable resolution on the debt ceiling, and we appreciate the time Congress is spending to find a reasonable solution. We understand that one proposed compromise includes lowering Medicare reimbursement for Part B drugs to Average Sales Price (ASP) +4%. In effect, this will reduce provider Medicare reimbursements by $3 billion. This reduction will make it even more difficult for oncology providers to give appropriate care and we urge you to take this provision off the table.

Providers already face difficulty providing care to patients due to a significant strain on resources, including artificially low ASP values used in calculating Medicare reimbursement. Since the current reimbursement formula includes distributors’ prompt pay discounts, which are not passed on to providers, additional cuts would be unduly burdensome. Therefore, HSCO requests that you oppose the proposed cuts considered in the debt ceiling negotiations.

Please preserve access to care in Hawaii by removing any cuts to cancer care from the debt ceiling discussions. We urge you to discuss alternatives that do not jeopardize access to care with your fellow Representatives as you continue this important task of resolving the national debt situation. If you have any questions, please contact me at (808) 561-6014.

Respectfully,

Charles F. Miller, M.D.
President
Hawaii Members of the US House of Representatives
July 21, 2011
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Cc: US Senators Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inouye