

March 11, 2009

The Honorable Joe Baca
United States Congress
2245 Rayburn House Off. Bldg
Washington, DC 20515
Via Fax: (909) 888-5959

RE: H.R. 716 - Support

Dear Congressman Baca,

We are writing on behalf of the Disability Rights Legal Center urging you to sponsor the **Access to Cancer Clinical Trials Act of 2009 (H.R. 716)**. This bill will require insurance companies to cover routine care provided as part of a cancer clinical trial, providing access to thousands of people and helping to advance our scientific knowledge.

Through our Cancer Legal Resource Center (CLRC), we have unique knowledge and experience with laws and legislation that impact the rights of individuals diagnosed with cancer, cancer survivors, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and employers.

By way of introduction, the Disability Rights Legal Center has worked to implement the civil rights of people with disabilities for over 30 years. We are the oldest cross-disability legal advocacy organization in the country. Our mission is to promote the rights of people with disabilities and the public interest in, and awareness of, those rights by providing legal and related services. The CLRC, a joint program of the DLRC and Loyola Law School, has provided over 90,000 people with free and confidential information and resources on cancer-related legal issues, including access to care, insurance, government benefits, estate planning, and employment. Please visit www.CancerLegalResourceCenter.org for more information.

Recently, a woman from Illinois contacted the CLRC to inquire about clinical trials and health insurance coverage of clinical trials. Her husband is a cancer patient and his doctor recommended that he participate in a clinical trial. Unfortunately, he lives in a state that does not require insurance coverage for the routine medical care costs while participating in a clinical trial. As he is unable to pay for those costs out of his own pocket, it is likely that he will have to forgo necessary treatment. Their story is an excellent example of why the Access to Cancer Clinical Trials Act is so important for people with cancer. Unfortunately, thousands of people are denied access to these trials each year, simply because their insurance does not cover routine treatment costs associated with the study and they are unable to pay for those costs out of their own pocket.

This bill goes hand-in-hand with our continuing efforts toward providing access to quality healthcare for all. Today, nearly half the states require insurance companies to cover routine care provided as part of a clinical trial.¹ However, where you live should not determine whether you live. Cancer clinical trials are a vital lifeline, offering access to high quality care and cutting edge treatments for people battling a life-threatening disease.

¹ See www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/ctlaws-home.

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We encourage you to support life-saving cancer research and access to care by co-sponsoring the Access to Cancer Clinical Trials Act of 2009.

Thank you for your consideration of support for **H.R. 716**.

Sincerely,



Paula D. Pearlman, Esq.
Executive Director,
Disability Rights Legal Center



Joanna L. Morales, Esq.
Director,
Cancer Legal Resource Center