

June 22, 2009

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
United States House of Representatives  
2334 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Via Fax: 202-225-5635

**RE: HR 995 - Support**

Dear Congressman Nadler:

We are writing on behalf of the Disability Rights Legal Center to thank you for sponsoring the Mammogram and MRI Availability Act of 2009 (HR 995), which will require health insurance companies to provide coverage for annual screening mammography for women 40 years of age and older. Screening and annual magnetic resonance imaging for women at high risk for breast cancer will also be required, if the plan includes coverage for diagnostic mammography for women 40 years of age or older.

Each year, more than 190,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 women die. Studies show that regular breast exams and mammograms are the best way to detect the early signs of cancer. Early detection of breast cancer reduces the duration and intensity of treatment, and increases the survival rate for women. However, early detection requires regular breast cancer screening, to which many women do not have access. As a result, breast cancer becomes much deadlier among low-income women who tend to have lower screening rates: they are 41% more likely to be diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer and are three times more likely to die from breast cancer.

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 across the country.

By way of introduction, the Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC) 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 national, joint program of the DLRC and Loyola Law School, has provided over 120,000 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](http://www.CancerLegalResourceCenter.org) for more information.

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The DRLC strongly supports HR 995, and we appreciate your dedication in the fight against breast cancer. In addition, as Congress moves forward with discussions on how to reform our nation's healthcare system, we urge you to champion the inclusion of the principles in HR 995 in any health care reform proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, or if there is anything that we can do to ensure that people with breast cancer are ensured proper health care coverage. We look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,



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



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