



August 19, 2016

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for S. 3223, Expanded Access to Treatment and Recovery Act

Dear Senator Murray:

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), I write in support of S. 3223, the Expanded Access to Treatment and Recovery Act. This bill would increase funding to reduce opioid use disorders and overdose.

ONS supports both Congress and the Administration in their work to combat the prescription drug abuse epidemic. Assessment, diagnostic, and treatment services should be easily accessible to individuals with an opioid use disorder. Recognizing the importance of efforts to address the serious and growing public health crisis caused by the inappropriate use of opioids, ONS urges lawmakers to also ensure that any new safeguards against the risk of opioids do not create barriers to access for cancer patients.

Oncology nurses are the health professionals involved in the administration and monitoring of chemotherapy and managing the associated side effects cancer patients may experience. Every day, we see the pain and suffering caused by cancer and understand the physical, emotional, and financial challenges that people with cancer face throughout their diagnosis and treatment. Opioids provide relief for many cancer patients facing moderate to severe pain as a result of their cancer diagnosis or cancer treatment.

ONS is a professional organization of over 39,000 registered nurses and other health care providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. The growing demand for cancer care, from prevention to palliative care, requires oncology nurses to play a pivotal and increasingly important role in delivering high quality, safe, effective and efficient health care to people affected by, or at risk for, cancer.

The Expanded Access to Treatment and Recovery Act would expand opioid use disorder treatment capacity and make such life-saving services more affordable for the individuals who need them. ONS thanks you for your leadership, and hopes Congress will continue to balance these public health concerns with the need to ensure the availability of appropriate pain management for cancer patients. We would be happy to discuss ways in which ONS may be of assistance in this endeavor, and would encourage you to contact Alec Stone, MA, MPA, ONS Director of Health Policy, at astone@ons.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan M. Schneider". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Susan Schneider, PhD, RN, AOCN®, FAAN
President
Oncology Nursing Society