Representative _________:

We are writing on behalf of the undersigned patient organizations to offer our support and endorsement of the Medicare Diagnostic Radiopharmaceutical Payment Equity Act of 2019. More than 20 million Americans benefit each year from nuclear medicine procedures used to diagnose and treat a wide variety of diseases. This legislation will ensure that patients receive medically appropriate tests that provide the most accurate diagnosis and treatment plans. In addition, it will spur continued innovations in nuclear imaging studies that keep pace with new medical breakthroughs.

Diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals are drugs necessary for all nuclear medicine imaging studies to diagnose and determine the severity of disease. Nuclear medicine studies image an organ’s anatomy and determine organ function which optimizes a physician’s ability to evaluate and determine the most effective treatment pathway for patients suffering from Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, cardiovascular disease, some forms of cancer, and other diseases. Diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals are statutorily regulated as drugs but are arbitrarily treated differently by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which has packaged them into procedural bundles, known as Ambulatory Payment Classifications (APCs), since 2008.

This has proved to be problematic as diagnostic radiopharmaceutical costs may vary widely within a nuclear medicine APC. At times, the costs exceed the whole APC payment. This translates into a strong disincentive for hospitals to utilize innovative targeted radiopharmaceuticals, serves to discourage investment in and research for new precision diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals, and impacts patient access to the most appropriate and innovative diagnostic tools at readily-accessible healthcare locations. In addition, this can result in inaccurate diagnosis and treatment plans.

As such we believe that CMS should be directed to pay separately for all diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals with a per day cost that exceeds $500, which will safeguard access to the most appropriate diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals.

We are pleased to support the Medicare Diagnostic Radiopharmaceutical Payment Equity Act of 2019 and look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to help see this legislation is enacted into law.

Respectfully,

Facing our Risk of Cancer Empowered, Lung Cancer Alliance, Lymphoma Research Foundation, Malecare, Men’s Health Network, NorCal CarciNet Community, Prostate Cancer International, ZERO- The End of Prostate Cancer

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¹Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging - http://www.snmmi.org/Patients/About/content.aspx?ItemNumber=22909