



March 19, 2019

An Open Letter in Support of State Medicaid Coverage for Lung Cancer Screening

We write in support of state Medicaid coverage for lung cancer screening for individuals at high risk.

Lung cancer is the nation's leading cancer killer of both women and men in the United States. An estimated 228,150 new cases of lung cancer were expected to be diagnosed in 2019, and 142,670 people are expected to lose their lives. Despite the tragic impact lung cancer has on our nation, many state Medicaid programs do not currently cover lung cancer screening for individuals at high risk. Our organizations believe that every state Medicaid program should cover this life-saving preventive health service in all fee-for-service and managed care plans.

Detecting lung cancer in early stages versus late stage is often the difference between life and death. Early detection and treatment of lung cancer translates into higher survival rates, but only 16 percent of lung cancer cases are diagnosed early when the disease is most treatable. Lack of consistent and comprehensive coverage puts thousands of Americans at risk for this dreaded disease but ensuring coverage for lung cancer screening for individuals will save lives.

According to the National Cancer Institute's National Lung Cancer Screening Trial, low-dose computed tomographic (LDCT) scans for individuals at high risk was associated with a 20 percent decrease in lung cancer mortality in those at high risk. Those at high risk are defined as individuals ages 55 to 80 years who have a smoking history of 30 pack years and currently smoke or have quit smoking within the last 15 years. Recognizing the value of LDCT screening, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) announced their recommendation on December 30, 2013 that certain high-risk populations be screened for lung cancer using this method – thereby making the screening available for individuals with most private insurance. Medicare also covers lung cancer screening for individuals 55-77 who have a smoking history of 30 pack years and currently smoke or have quit smoking within the last 15 years.

A higher percentage of individuals in Medicaid smoke when compared to the general public, and therefore more Medicaid enrollees are at high risk for developing lung cancer – which makes coverage for this population even more important. **As such, our organizations strongly encourage state Medicaid programs to include annual low-dose CT scans for lung cancer screening as a covered service for individuals at high risk.**

Now is the time for state Medicaid programs to act. We call on all state Medicaid programs to cover LDCT lung cancer screening for individuals at high risk in all fee-for-service and managed care plans.

Sincerely,

American Lung Association
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
American Cancer Society – Cancer Action Network
American Society of Preventive Oncology
American College of Chest Physicians
Anne Arundel Medical Center
Oncology Nursing Society
Association for the Treatment of Tobacco Use and Dependence
Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation
A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation
Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc.
Citizens for Radioactive Radon Reduction
Dusty Joy Foundation (LiveLung)
Free ME from Lung Cancer
Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute
Lung Cancer Alliance
Lung Cancer Circle of Hope
Lung Cancer Connection
Lung Cancer Initiative of North Carolina
Lung Cancer Research Foundation
LUNgevity Foundation
Massachusetts Radiological Society
Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation

Rexanna's Foundation for Fighting Lung Cancer

St. Dominic Hospital

St. Elizabeth Healthcare

The American College of Radiology in Virginia

The Clifton F. Mountain Foundation for Education & Research in Lung Cancer

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health Carbone Cancer Center

Triage Cancer

Upstage Lung Cancer

Brigham Health Lung Cancer Screening Program

Respiratory Health Association

VCU Health System