



January 14, 2021

Dear Representative:

The undersigned organizations represent thousands of patients and consumers in Tennessee who face serious and chronic health conditions. We write today to strongly urge you to reject Senate Joint Resolution 25, authorizing the implementation of the TennCare waiver that would reduce Tennesseans' ability to access needed healthcare. TennCare is critical to helping our state's most vulnerable patients access care, especially in the midst of a global pandemic.

Our organizations have clearly and repeatedly voiced our deep concerns with the TennCare proposal,<sup>1</sup> as well as our strong opposition to block grants in Medicaid in general.<sup>2</sup> Block grants are designed to cap or limit the amount of federal funding provided to states, forcing them to either make up the difference with their own funds or make cuts to their programs reducing access to care for the patients we represent. Program cuts will likely result in enrollment limits, benefit reductions, reductions in provider payments or increased out-of-pocket cost-sharing for Medicaid enrollees. The TennCare waiver specifically includes authority to limit prescription drug coverage, a dangerous proposal for patients who need medications to treat serious and chronic health conditions.

Since our organizations filed comments on this TennCare waiver nearly one year ago, our nation has been overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and our concerns about how Tennessee's proposal will harm patients with serious and chronic health conditions have only intensified. It is irresponsible to implement this waiver during this public health crisis. This waiver agreement, if implemented, will limit Tennessee's flexibility in responding to recessions, pandemics, new treatments and natural disasters – and as a consequence moves in the opposite direction of the lessons learned from 2020.

Our organizations strongly urge you to reject this bad deal for patients in Tennessee and oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Diabetes Association  
American Lung Association  
American Kidney Fund  
Arthritis Foundation  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
Epilepsy Foundation of East Tennessee  
Hemophilia Federation of America  
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
March of Dimes  
National Hemophilia Foundation  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
Susan G. Komen  
United Way Worldwide

CC: Governor Bill Lee

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<sup>1</sup> Patient Groups Oppose Tennessee Medicaid Block Grant Proposal. December 18, 2019. Available at: <https://www.lung.org/media/press-releases/patient-groups-oppose-medicaid-block-grant>

<sup>2</sup> Patient Groups Express Strong Opposition to New CMS Guidance on Medicaid Block Grants. January 30, 2020. Available at: [https://www.lung.org/media/press-releases/patient-groups-express-strong-\(1\)](https://www.lung.org/media/press-releases/patient-groups-express-strong-(1))