



January 14, 2022

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,
Cross Building, Room 209
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Chair Claxton, Chair Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society urges the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services to **vote ought not to pass on LD 867** because it would threaten the well-being of those facing cancer by undermining evidence-based public health policies.

At The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, our mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS exists to find cures and ensure access to treatments for blood cancer patients.

We know patients are at increased risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19. LLS' own research shows that as many as 1 in 4 blood cancer patients may not be able to mount the same robust antibody response as healthy individuals after being vaccinated against COVID-19, making it even more important for those around them to be vaccinated¹. Further, higher vaccination rates mean lower hospitalization rates. That reduces strain on our health care system and helps to ensure that hospitals can care for patients with other, non-COVID emergencies. No patient with a serious or chronic health condition such as a blood cancer should be forced to delay, avoid, or abandon treatment or care because our health system has been overwhelmed by cases that could have been largely avoided through vaccination.

We all must do our part to ensure our actions keep the most vulnerable around us safe, including adults and children fighting cancer. As such, we respectfully urge the committee to help protect immunocompromised cancer patients and oppose efforts that limit or undermine proven public health strategies like vaccine requirements.

Sincerely,

Ernie Davis
Regional Director, Government Affairs
The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

¹ (Greenberger, L.M., Saltzman, L.A., Senefeld, J.W., Johnson, P.W., DeGennaro, L.J., Nichols, G.L., Antibody response to SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in patients with hematologic malignancies, Cancer Cell (2021), [doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccell.2021.07.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccell.2021.07.012).)