

May 16, 2008

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
2262 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DeLauro:

On behalf of Families USA, the voice of health care consumers, I am writing to commend you on the introduction of the Breast Cancer Protection Act of 2007 (H.R. 758). The legislation, which would require health plans to provide coverage for a minimum hospital stay for mastectomies, lumpectomies and lymph node dissection for the treatment of breast cancer as well as coverage for secondary consultations, will help ease the burden for those struggling with breast cancer.

One of the challenges of the private market is that insurance benefits vary by state. This practice has led to a patchwork of coverage; for example, only a handful of states have benefit protections that include a minimum mastectomy stay. Women struggling with a life threatening disease should not have to worry about whether the insurance company in their state will provide them with the same level of coverage as neighboring states or whether they will hit their lifetime cap as a result of expensive cancer treatments.

The number of uninsured Americans is rapidly increasing, in part because of a lack of protections for health care consumers. Health insurance companies are permitted to deny coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions, including women who have been treated for breast cancer, even if they currently are cancer free. Those living without health insurance are more likely to forgo or delay necessary medical care and are more likely to die prematurely, in part because they forgo required cancer screenings.

Thank you for introducing this much needed legislation. We look forward to working with you to pass the Breast Cancer Protection Act of 2007

Sincerely,



Ronald F. Pollack
Executive Director