

June 6, 2019

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senate  
110 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senate  
510 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Van Hollen and Cardin,

The undersigned organizations share a commitment to eliminating barriers in patient access to cancer clinical trials and offer our endorsement of S. 946, *the Henrietta Lacks Enhancing Cancer Research Act of 2019*. It is only fitting that this effort is named in honor of Henrietta Lacks whose cells have made much of the progress we have seen in the understanding and treatment of a variety of diseases possible.

Clinical trials are an essential step in advancing potential new cancer treatments from the research setting to the cancer care clinic, and patient participation in these trials is crucial to this success. Most patients express a willingness to participate in clinical research, yet only a small fraction ultimately end up enrolling in a cancer clinical trial due to barriers that make participating difficult or even impossible. These barriers include lack of available trials at local sites, restrictive eligibility criteria, transportation to trial sites, taking time off from work, and potentially increased medical and non-medical costs. Consequently, approximately 20% of cancer clinical trials fail due to insufficient patient enrollment. Addressing these barriers is key in ensuring progress in cancer research, and expanded participation in cancer clinical trials.

Like you, we believe that a special emphasis should be made on decreasing disparities in cancer clinical trials. Ethnic minorities, older Americans, rural Americans, and poorer Americans are among the groups that continue to be under-represented in cancer clinical trials. Without action, these Americans will continue to face barriers to enrollment in cancer clinical trials, depriving them from access to new treatments and interventions. Additionally, increasing access to cancer clinical trials will ensure that cancer research becomes more efficient, reducing the time and effort needed to translate basic science discoveries into meaningful therapeutic advances that benefit all patients.

By analyzing the federal policies that directly impact participation rates in cancer clinical trials and then recommending potential policy changes across federal agencies, we can reduce barriers that currently keep patients from enrolling in clinical trials. That is why S. 946, *the Henrietta Lacks Enhancing Cancer Research Act of 2019* is so important.

We look forward to working with you to pass this legislation and bring more attention and resources to this issue so that we can begin to remove the barriers to cancer clinical trials.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Lung Association  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
American Society for Radiation Oncology  
Association of American Cancer Institutes  
Association of Community Cancer Centers  
[BreastCancerTrials.org](http://BreastCancerTrials.org) (Quantum Leap Healthcare Collaborative)  
Cancer Support Community  
Deadliest Cancers Coalition  
Fight Colorectal Cancer  
International Myeloma Foundation  
Lazarex Cancer Foundation  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
LUNGevity Foundation  
Melanoma Research Foundation  
National Brain Tumor Society  
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship  
North American Association of Central Cancer Registries  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network  
Sustainable Healthy Communities  
Susan G. Komen  
Triage Cancer  
ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer