April 3, 2023

The Honorable Tom Oliverson, M.D.
Texas House of Representatives
Room E2.408
Austin, TX 78768-2910

RE: Support: HB 118 (Cortez) Relating to health benefit plan coverage for certain tests to detect prostate cancer.

Dear Dr. Oliverson,

The undersigned organizations represent physicians and patient advocacy groups in our state and across the nation who strongly support HB 118, which allow men to receive prostate cancer screening without a deductible, copayment, or coinsurance for prostate cancer screening for men at risk for prostate

cancer. The bill is specifically tailored to apply to men over the age of 50 and men over the age of 40 with a family history of prostate cancer or another risk factor for prostate cancer.

Our organizations are dedicated to saving lives by improving access to screening services that can help catch prostate cancer early - when the disease is almost 100 percent survivable. Early detection for men at high risk improves outcomes, and targeting men with risk factors for prostate cancer can reduce health disparities in the populations most impacted by this disease. We applaud your efforts and offer you our support for this legislation.

- Prostate cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths among men in the United States and a significant healthcare problem due to its high incidence. Although one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, the odds increase to one in six if they are African American, and one in three if they have a family history. For 2023, the American Cancer Society projects 17,230 new cases of prostate cancer in Texas and 2,290 deaths[1].

- The incidence of prostate cancer is almost 70 percent higher in African American men, who have a two-fold higher rate of prostate cancer mortality relative to men of other races. African American men are diagnosed with more aggressive disease by stage and grade, at younger ages, and at higher incidence compared to white men in settings of equal access to treatment.

- This racial disparity in mortality is currently the worst among all cancers in the United States. In order to eliminate disparities, we must eliminate the barriers for screening to maximize the early detection of cancer when it is at its most treatable and least lethal stage.

- Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer within the Veterans Health Administration. Veterans and members of the military experience higher rates of prostate cancer than the general population.

- The clinical value of prostate cancer screening has been scientifically validated and endorsed by the American Urological Association, American Cancer Society, National Comprehensive Cancer Network, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine. It is a necessary step to diagnose prostate cancer and part of a larger conversation between patient and provider about prostate cancer risk.

- Late-stage prostate cancer places an increased economic burden on the health care system, including lost worker productivity and increased financial burdens for patients and their caregivers.

- Existing law requires health insurance policies to provide coverage for the screening and diagnosis of prostate cancer, however deductibles, co-pays, and other out-of-pocket expenses may deter or prevent high-risk and underserved populations from seeking care and detecting early-stage disease.

- Similar legislation was passed in New York (SB 6882, 2018), Maryland (SB 661, 2020) Rhode Island (SB 383, 2021), and Illinois (HB 5318, 2022), which eliminates out-of-pocket expenses for high-risk patients while also protecting them from discrimination and preserving their access to

[1] Cancer Facts & Figures 2023, American Cancer Society

necessary, and often, life-saving screening. California, Virginia, New Jersey and Pennsylvania are considering legislation this year.

Thank you, and please consider this our endorsement of HB 118, a crucial bill to improve the lives of men and their loved ones in Texas.

Respectfully,

Active Surveillance Patients International
American Association of Clinical Urologists
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Surgeons
American Urological Association
AnCan
Association for Pelvic Organ Prolapse Support
Black Nurses Rock San Antonio Chapter
Cancer and Careers
CancerCare
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network
Men's Health Network
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Prostate Cancer International (PCaI)
Prostate Conditions Education Council
Prostate Health Education Network
RetireSafe
Texas Medical Society
Texas Urological Society
The Simon Foundation for Continence
Triage Cancer
ZERO Prostate Cancer

CC: Texas House of Representatives Committee on Insurance