



American Society for
Transplantation and Cellular Therapy

September 16, 2021

The Honorable Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senate
Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
U.S. Senate
Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senate
Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Rosen, Barrasso, and Baldwin:

The American Society for Transplantation and Cell Therapy (ASTCT) writes in support of S. 2566, *the Improving Access to Transfusion Care for Hospice Patients Act*, and urges Congress to swiftly pass this bipartisan legislation. ASTCT is a professional membership association of more than 2,600 physicians, scientists and other health care professionals promoting blood and marrow transplantation and cellular therapy through research, education, scholarly publications, and clinical standards. The clinical teams in our society have been instrumental in developing and implementing clinical care standards and advancing cellular therapy science, including participation in trials that led to current FDA approvals for chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (CAR-T) therapy.

Innovative cellular therapies, such as CAR-T therapy, are often a last resort treatment for blood cancer patients who previously did not have access to these life-saving treatments. However, our support for this legislation is on behalf of our patients who are not candidates for cellular therapies or who continue to face barriers to access.

This legislation will allow the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to do a demonstration project that would carve out payment for transfusion services from the Medicare hospice all-inclusive per diem payment, and bill Medicare for transfusions separately. Currently, blood transfusions are paid for out of a capped hospice benefit amount, making them cost prohibitive to many patients. As a result, blood cancer patients often delay opting in to the Medicare hospice program not receiving proper care they need. Palliative care benefits should include access to blood transfusions as they have proven beneficial to a number of our patients.

We applaud your leadership on *the Improving Access to Transfusion Care for Hospice Patients Act* and look forward to working with you to see it enacted. For any questions or additional information please reach out to ASTCT's Director of Government Relations, Alycia Maloney, at amaloney@astct.org.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stella M Davies".

Stella M Davies, MBBS, PhD, MRCP
President, ASTCT