**Email/Letter Template**

Date

The Honorable (Insert Congressman’s or Senator’s name)U.S. Senator/Member of Congress

Address line 1

Address line 2

Dear Congressman/Senator (Insert Name):

* My names is XXXXXX from XXXXXXX. I am writing in regard to proton therapy and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed rule for the Radiation Oncology Alternative Payment Model (“RO Model”). If finalized as proposed, CMS could force many hospital departments and proton therapy centers to close, depriving cancer patients of a treatment recommended by their physician—one that is non-invasive and painless; results in less damage to surrounding healthy tissue and organs; has no impact on a patient’s energy level and overall health; significantly lowers the chances of secondary cancers later in life (which also results in lower long-term cost); and results in fewer, *if any,* side effects compared with conventional radiation treatment options.
* I implore you to pressure CMS to revisit the Proposed Rule and revise its mischaracterization of proton therapy as low value. It’s quite the contrary, in fact: Proton therapy is highly valuable—I’m proof of that. Proton therapy cured my cancer and maintained my quality of life.
* **[insert personal story here] My treatment was painless; I had no side effects; and today I’m cancer free and feeling great …**
* As proposed, the RO Model makes such drastic cuts to proton therapy reimbursement that the current limited access to the treatment could be further restricted, depriving Medicare beneficiaries and others access to a clinically appropriate modality. Currently, 32 proton therapy centers (with others under construction or development) rely upon reimbursement models from Medicare, Medicaid and private payers to support their ongoing operations. With upwards of a 50% reduction in reimbursements under the Proposed Rule, several centers will have to re-assess whether furnishing proton beam therapy is a financially viable option and will likely close. It will also hinder the development of new centers continuing to limit access to rural and underserved communities. My family members, friends and others may never have access to this extraordinary treatment should they need it in their lifetime.

In the Proposed Rule, CMS questioned the benefits of proton beam therapy relative to other, less expensive modalities. In support of its position, CMS cited the 2014 Institute for Clinical Economic Review (ICER) report conducted on behalf of the Washington State Health Care Technology Authority and the June 2018 MedPAC Report to Congress. I strongly disagree with this characterization of proton therapy as a modality with limited benefits vis-à-vis other modalities and believe the evidence demonstrates that proton beam therapy provides significant value to patients. The treatment delivers precise, high doses of radiation to accurately target cancer cells without causing significant damage to healthy tissue surrounding the cancerous tumor. With proton therapy, there are usually minimal to no side effects and generally patients have outstanding disease-free survival rates. I am *one of thousands* who have been treated with proton therapy and can attest to its benefits.

Proton therapy has a proven history of improved outcomes over other treatments. It was cleared as a safe and effective treatment by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) *thirty-one years ago.*

As cancer survival rates have increased significantly in the last 20 years, a diagnosis has become a *chronic illness* for many. It’s more important than ever to reduce costly and debilitating short- and long-term side effects of cancer treatment with a therapy that is the *least toxic and harmful to patients.*

One last point: The United States is the world leader in proton therapy technology and treatment centers – currently 32 with several more planned. But, the rest of the world has discovered this important technology and has embraced it. Proton centers are being constructed in all developed countries, and proton research in those countries is growing exponentially. This proposed change by CMS would effectively shut down proton therapy treatment, research, and growth in the U.S. while the rest of the world moves ahead of us. This would be a tragic outcome.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. Please stand up for me and thousands of others in your district/state who have benefitted from proton therapy.

Sincerely,