



August 4, 2022

Honorable Jason Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Information About Cancer Drugs Covered by Part B of Medicare

Dear Congressman:

This letter provides information about the use of drugs that treat cancer and that are covered by Part B of the Medicare program.

You and your colleagues asked the Congressional Budget Office to identify the top 15 such drugs on the basis of the number of enrollees that use them. CBO used data from the Medicare Part B drug dashboard available through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and defined drugs that treat cancer as those that CMS identifies as chemotherapy products; CBO excluded drugs that treat side-effects of treatments for cancer, such as drugs that treat anemia or nausea.¹ The data are limited to beneficiaries in Medicare's fee-for-service program, so the list of drugs reflects usage by Medicare's fee-for-service beneficiaries but not by enrollees in Medicare Advantage plans.

CBO identified the top 15 chemotherapy drugs in 2020 by adding together the number of beneficiaries who used a brand-name product and the number who used a generic or biosimilar version of that product when that alternative was available and then ranking drugs accordingly.² The list

¹ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, "Medicare Part B Spending by Drug" (accessed July 29, 2022), <https://tinyurl.com/y9dcu7er>.

² Some of the drugs, such as rituximab, are used to treat cancer as well as other conditions. For its analysis, CBO counted all enrollees who used a given drug and did not separately identify enrollees using the drug to treat cancer. In addition, some cancer treatments are combinations of two individual cancer treatments. Those drugs are considered individually for the purpose of this analysis.

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identifies drugs by their active ingredient, with the active ingredient for biosimilar products in parentheses where applicable:

1. bevacizumab (bevacizumab-awwb, bevacizumab-bvzr)
2. leuprolide acetate
3. rituximab (rituximab-abbs, rituximab-pvvr)
4. pembrolizumab
5. fluorouracil
6. carboplatin
7. cyclophosphamide
8. capecitabine
9. nivolumab
10. docetaxel
11. trastuzumab (trastuzumab-dttb, trastuzumab-pkrb, trastuzumab-dkst, trastuzumab-qyyp, trastuzumab-anns)
12. fulvestrant
13. paclitaxel
14. pemetrexed disodium
15. bortezomib

I hope this information is useful to you and your colleagues. Please contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip L. Swagel", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Phillip L. Swagel
Director

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cc: Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
House Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget

Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce