



To: Chair Abney, First Vice Chair Slater, Second Vice Chair Marszalkowski, and Members of House Finance Committee

From: Oncology Nursing Society

Date: April 30, 2025

RE: Support H5771 – Ensure Cancer Patient Access to Fertility Care

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) and the nearly 130 oncology nurse members in the state of Rhode Island, we would like to express our strong support for H5771, which would require state-regulated health plans to provide coverage for standard fertility preservation services for men and women undergoing cancer treatments, which may cause infertility. We believe this legislation is critical in ensuring that oncology patients are able to pursue reproductive care following their cancer treatment.

Oncology nurses witness firsthand the profound emotional, physical, and psychological toll that a cancer diagnosis and treatment can take on a person. In addition to the immediate focus to beat the disease, many patients face the daunting prospect of iatrogenic (treatment-related) infertility once their treatment is finished.

Iatrogenic infertility is infertility that results as a side effect of medical treatments, particularly those used in oncology. For patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy, particularly in the pelvic region, or for individuals undergoing surgery for certain cancers, these life-saving treatments can inadvertently damage the reproductive organs or alter hormone levels, leading to permanent infertility. In many cases, this infertility is a direct result of the very treatments intended to save lives, making it particularly tragic and avoidable with proper preventive measures.

The loss of fertility options can be as devastating as the cancer diagnosis itself for our patients, particularly for young adults and individuals of reproductive age who may have planned for families in the future. For those who survive cancer, the option of fertility preservation offers hope. By undergoing fertility preservation – such as egg, sperm, or embryo freezing – before beginning their cancer treatments, patients have an opportunity to preserve their ability to have biological children in the future.

Unfortunately, for many whose insurance does not cover these services, the high cost of fertility preservation can be an insurmountable barrier. This financial burden should not exist for patients who are already battling for their lives. H5771 would ensure that patients have the option to build their biological family in the future, without being burdened by costs that may otherwise be prohibitive.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter and encourage you to support H5771. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss our support, please feel free to contact healthpolicy@ons.org

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ONS is a professional association that represents the over 100,000 oncology nurses in the United States and is the professional home to more than 35,000 members. ONS is committed to promoting excellence in oncology nursing and the transformation of cancer care. Since 1975, ONS has provided a professional community for oncology nurses, developed evidence-based education programs and treatment information, and advocated for patient care, all in an effort to improve the quality of life and outcomes for patients with cancer and their families.