

PROTON BEAM THERAPY

The Issue

Attachment A

Colorado needs legislation to instruct insurance companies from holding Proton Radiation Therapy to a higher standard of clinical evidence than traditional photon radiation.

- Proton Therapy is often denied coverage by insurers calling this modality "experimental" or "investigational" despite it being FDA approved since 1988.
- To date, more than 800 clinical studies have been published on the benefits of proton therapy, with the number of studies expanding every year.
- Over 170,000 people have undergone Proton therapy for various cancers.
- There are 34 Proton Centers operating in the US today

Benefits of Proton Therapy.

- Proton Therapy can be beneficial and sometimes preferable to treat certain cancers in sensitive areas in adults.
- Proton therapy targets the tumor directly, minimizing damage to healthy surrounding tissue. This can reduce the incidence of secondary cancers and other harmful latent effects common with conventional radiation.
- For children and adolescents Proton therapy is often more easily approved by insurers due to its efficacy and safety in protecting developing tissue in close proximity to the cancer. Not experimental on kids, not experimental on adults.
- Medicare often approves Proton therapy when recommended.
- Proton Therapy is painless, noninvasive, and with fewer adverse effects and consequently often lower long term costs associated with care.
- Some proton centers are beginning to reduce the cost of proton therapy to be commensurate with traditional radiation therapy. [4]

WHAT WOULD THIS LEGISLATION DO?

This legislation is modeled after similar legislation passed in Oklahoma in 2015 with overwhelming bi-partisan support. **It would not be a mandate to automatically cover Proton Therapy in every case.**

It would **instruct insurance companies to not hold proton therapy to a higher standard of clinical evidence than photon radiation therapy.**

Proton therapy, when indicated and recommended by physicians, should be evaluated and held to the same standard of clinical evidence as traditional radiation.

When you receive a cancer diagnosis you should be focused on healing, not fighting for treatment. This legislation could make proton therapy accessible for those who need it most.

63%

of cancer patients aged 18 to 64 whose physicians recommend proton therapy (as the best course of treatment for their disease) are initially denied by their insurer [5]

170,000

patients have been treated with proton therapy worldwide with over 75,000 of those in the United States [3]

42-50%

of patients are still unable to receive the treatment they are seeking after an appeals process taking 5 to 6 weeks