

5 Reasons to Come to Capitol Hill

BY STEVEN L. D'AMATO, BSPHarm, BCOP




ACCC is the leading education and advocacy organization for the multidisciplinary cancer team. In this column, I'd like to focus on the advocacy piece. In

broadest terms, ACCC advocates for quality cancer care. ACCC also empowers you—the membership—to speak out on issues of importance to your programs, patients, and community. One of the most powerful ways ACCC does this is through our annual Capitol Hill Day. For most of you, Congress and the White House may seem far removed from what you do on a daily basis—caring for patients with cancer. So why should you take time out from your busy program or practice to join us for Capitol Hill Day 2016? Here are five compelling reasons:

- 1. You can help ensure the financial viability of your cancer program.** To treat our patients, we must first be able to keep our doors open. That means adequate reimbursement for the life-saving services we provide. There is a paradigm shift happening in healthcare as we move from a fee-for-service model to value-based care. Shortly after last year's ACCC Hill Day, Congress voted to repeal the SGR and enacted MACRA. We must be a part of the discussion as these new models evolve to ensure that we continue to be adequately reimbursed for the services we provide. Everyone loses if a cancer program or oncology practice is forced to close its doors.
- 2. We are in a unique position to advocate for our patients and programs.** Cancer care providers are the frontline in the fight against this devastating disease, and our representatives want to hear from us. Cancer is a disease that touches everyone. Whether or not someone has experienced cancer firsthand, chances are that someone close to them or someone they know has been affected by cancer. Capitol Hill Day allows you the opportunity to talk

with your elected representatives about the challenges and successes your patients and your cancer programs face daily.

- 3. Access. Access. Access.** The first step in the fight against cancer is the ability to access treatment, yet too many of our patients continue to struggle with this issue. Whether the barrier to care is related to financial toxicity—a patient's ability to pay for treatment—or patients living in rural areas who must travel far from home to receive care or patients who are having difficulty navigating a fragmented and complex healthcare system, as cancer care providers we must do everything we can to ensure all Americans have equal access to care. Often Congressional action is required. Where would we be without legislation that mandated reimbursement for off-label drug use? More recently, we've had great success with legislation related to oral parity. Yet legislative action does not happen in a vacuum. If we don't share our challenges—and our solutions—with those who can create change, then change will not happen.
- 4. Empowerment.** Anecdotally, every ACCC member who has participated in Capitol Hill Day has talked about what a positive and rewarding experience it has been. Having your voice be heard—alongside those of your colleagues from around the country—and knowing that in some small way you are contributing to improving the care of cancer patients is a powerful feeling. And this year's Capitol Hill Day promises to surpass the successes we've experienced in the past. Learn more about these changes and how ACCC continues to improve Capitol Hill Day on page 11.
- 5. ACCC makes it easy.** Participants in this year's Capitol Hill Day will receive an orientation and hands-on training so that you'll know what to expect and be well-prepared for your scheduled visits with legislators.

If you cannot attend this year's Capitol Hill Day, I urge you to pass this on to a colleague who can, and I look forward to seeing you on March 1-2, 2016. 

- ▶ The Cancer Care Collaborative—Where Patients are an Active Member of the Cancer Care Team
- ▶ Building Bridges, Breaking-down Barriers: One Psycho-Oncology Program's Approach to Quality Patient-Centered Psychosocial Care
- ▶ A Support Program for Providers that Prevents Burnout and Improves Care
- ▶ The Oncology Nursing Fellowship Program: A Pipeline for the Future
- ▶ Health Info on the Go: Community Outreach at the Farmer's Market
- ▶ Developing an Oncology IT Strategy
- ▶ New Technology: The Racetrack Microtron
- ▶ Community Health Needs Assessments: How Your Cancer Program Can Prepare
- ▶ 2015 ACCC Innovator Award Winner. Engaging Patients & Assisting PCPs in Lung Cancer Screening

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