issues

ACCC Announces Its 2023 Advocacy Agenda

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The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) is truly "a community of cancer centers," representing members nationwide from all care delivery settings: health systems, comprehensive cancer programs, academic centers, community cancer programs, and private practices. ACCC educates and advocates on behalf of its members to ensure they can provide high-quality, comprehensive, and equitable care for patients with cancer and their caregivers.

Each year, ACCC is active at the state and federal level, advocating on behalf of its members to ensure that the rules and regulations in place do not, in any way, impede the delivery of cancer care. These efforts can include advocating equitable access to new therapies and innovative technologies, adequate reimbursement for services and treatments, and equitable access to care and clinical trials. For 2023, ACCC members have identified four core areas of focus, among a larger set of issues and concerns, that the association will be supporting.

1. Protect adequate and stable reimbursement for oncology providers. Year after year, increasing cuts to Medicare reimbursement continue to threaten the financial viability of our nation's cancer programs and practices. ACCC supports payment policies that adequately and sustainably cover the costs of delivering comprehensive cancer care, while accounting for ongoing inflationary pressures. Any reimbursement changes should not undermine oncology providers' ability to deliver high-quality, affordable, and equitable cancer care to their communities.

2. Reduce delays in care due to utilization management. Health plan utilization management policies, including prior authorization and step therapy, can act as a barrier to patients with cancer, who are seeking access to necessary treatments in a timely manner. When combined with a lack of transparency in the approval process, utilization management requirements create significant burdens for oncology providers and can delay critical care for their patients. ACCC champions federal utilization management reform that improves health plan transparency and protects patients from unnecessary and harmful delays in care.

3. Preserve provider and patient choice in anti-cancer treatment. Health plans and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are increasingly restricting provider and patient options when deciding where patients can receive care, how anti-cancer drugs can be dispensed, and which drugs will be covered by the health plan. To improve accessibility and affordability of therapeutic options to patients, while maintaining clinical quality and safety standards, ACCC believes that patients and their providers must retain the autonomy to make treatment choices that consider the patient's unique circumstances and any barriers to care.

4. Improve access to and coverage of supportive oncology services. Comprehensive cancer care delivery is recommended in clinical guidelines and considered essential for delivering high-quality care. ACCC seeks to promote policy solutions and value-based payment reform that increase access to—and reimbursement for—supportive oncology services, including but not limited to, social work, psychology and psychiatry, physical and occupational therapy, nutrition and dietetics, genetic counseling, spiritual services, navigation, integrative medicine, financial advocacy, palliative care, fertility services, and critical services provided by other specialty service professionals (i.e., oncology pharmacists).

In addition to these core areas, ACCC will continue to advocate on issues related to the following themes:

- Increase diversity in cancer clinical trials
- Ensure continued access to care through telehealth
- Support the development of a resilient oncology workforce
- Advance the value journey in oncology

For more information about the association's 2023 advocacy priorities, visit accc-cancer.org. OI

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