

Oncology Issues

The Journal of the Association of Community Cancer Centers

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The President's Corner

REIMBURSEMENT: IS IT AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE?



During my term as ACCC President, I have become increasingly exposed to anecdotal reports from members around the country about reimbursement difficulties that appear to be impacting the quality of patient care. In addition to payment denials related to patients on clinical trials and the use of chemotherapeutic drugs and biologicals for off-label indications, concern is now being expressed about the impact payment policies may have on the development of new drugs and other new modalities for the treatment of cancer patients.

The National Cancer Institute, the American Society of Clinical Oncologists' Clinical Practice Committee, and the Texas Society of Oncology, among others, will be addressing these issues this year.

The ACCC, through its reimbursement initiative, will also be in the forefront with respect to this problem, assuming we can overcome our perennial problem of underfunding for the investigation of these and other membership needs. The ACCC is seeking outside sources of funding for its reimbursement initiative.

Part of this initiative requires the development of a data base of current reimbursement problems that appear to be impacting quality of care so that strategies for intervention can be developed.

Until we have a formal mechanism in place to collect data, I invite members to submit information to ACCC Headquarters to add to the anecdotal reports already received. Any written documentation from third-party payers denying reimbursement would be especially helpful. A short statement as to how the care of specific patients was (or was not) affected would also be of help. However, to protect patient confidentiality, please delete all patient identification from any material that you submit.

Your participation will help the ACCC to establish a base from which more comprehensive data can be solicited in the future.

David K. King, M.D.
President