



## Partnerships Pay off

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## RESIDENT'S CORNER

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Committee. If that happened, approval by the full Senate was viewed as likely.

In preparation for a hearing before the committee, ACCC Public Policy Director Jamie Young and other key players visited each of the committee members. The testimony they presented at the hearing convinced the committee to approve AB 1985 by a 6 to 1 margin, despite opposing testimony by the insurance industry. Following approval by the full Senate, one final step remained: obtaining Governor Wilson's signature.

The oncology community faced a major hurdle in obtaining the Governor's approval. At a time when California was facing a burgeoning budget crisis, the Department of Finance released an analysis of AB 1985 that estimated a potential cost to the state of \$10 million in increased insurance premiums for its employees. With the help of ACCC's Industry Advisory Council, a rebuttal analysis, demonstrating the bill's cost effectiveness and potential cost savings, was prepared and sent to the Governor. All involved parties disseminated copies of the analysis to the Governor's office through their own channels. ACCC's legal counsel helped to secure access to Governor Wilson's key advisors.

The oncology community's strategy to attack the problem at both a grassroots level and through a direct campaign in the Governor's office worked. Governor Wilson chose to overrule the Department of Finance's veto recommendation and signed the bill into law.

There is strength in numbers, but the partnerships necessary to attain those numbers can be difficult to forge. The passage of AB 1985 (and SB 1533 in my own state of Illinois) shows that when patient care is at stake, the oncology community can become a cohesive, effective advocacy body. Congratulations and thanks to all who participated!

**Robert T. Clarke, M.H.A.**