ASCO Value Framework
Fact Sheet

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is working to define value in cancer care to help individual physicians and their patients make the wisest choices among their potential cancer treatment options. This effort is part of ASCO’s long-standing mission to improve access to high-quality, high-value care for every patient with cancer.

Defining value: The best care for each patient

ASCO’s Value in Cancer Care Task Force defines value as the combination of three factors for a cancer treatment regimen: medical benefit, side effects and cost. These are the factors that matter most to our patients. From the patient’s standpoint, it means getting the best possible outcomes consistent with his or her own personal preferences and financial situation.

An urgent need: Reliable information for physicians and their patients

Advances in cancer therapy have produced tremendous gains in survival and quality of life for patients. But the cost of cancer care has risen sharply in recent years and is growing fast. As a result, more patients are experiencing significant financial burdens as a result of their care, and some are not able to afford treatment (see box).

High-cost care does not necessarily mean high-quality care or improved outcomes for patients. With patient finances already a concern routinely discussed in the doctor’s office, it is essential to provide objective tools for doctors and patients to understand the relative value of the treatments that are available.

As the organization representing the nation’s cancer care professionals, ASCO’s goal is to provide its members with the resources they need to discuss value with patients, so that together, they can select individual treatments that are best for them. Treatment choices will always be up to the physician and patient based on medical judgment and individual circumstances.

ASCO value framework: A method for individualized decision-making

ASCO’s value framework will be a method by which physicians can help their patients assess the relative value of treatment options. The framework will allow physicians to consider individual patient circumstances and the best available information on a particular treatment regimen’s effectiveness, the severity of the expected side effects, and treatment’s costs.

Cancer’s Financial Burden on Patients

The cost of cancer care is rising. The average monthly cost of newly approved cancer drugs has grown substantially to a reported $10,000.1 Studies show that patients struggle with these costs:

- 45 percent of patients reported cost-related non-adherence to cancer medications2
- Patients with cancer are almost three times more likely to declare bankruptcy than those without cancer3
- Nearly 10 percent of patients said cancer caused significant financial strain on their family, and were also more likely to report overall lower quality of life4
- Even among mostly insured patients with cancer, nearly half reported health care cost concerns and 22 percent said their family made sacrifices to pay for care5
Currently under development, the framework will likely take the form of an algorithm that will factor in different assessments across the three domains of effectiveness, toxicity and cost.

The value framework is for doctors to use exclusively on an individual basis with their patients. ASCO does not intend to publish rankings or any other generalizable information about the overall value of specific treatments.

**ASCO’s process: Engaging all stakeholders**

The value framework is being developed by ASCO’s Value in Cancer Care Task Force, a multidisciplinary group of physicians, payers and patient advocates. Established in 2007, the Task Force has helped physicians and patients navigate value issues in a number of ways, including developing a [guide for patients](#) on managing the cost of care and educating physicians about value considerations.

ASCO’s Value in Cancer Care Task Force is working with diverse experts and stakeholders as part of a deliberative process to develop the new framework. We are obtaining input from patients, physicians, health economists, and representatives from the pharmaceutical and insurance industries to ensure that the framework is comprehensive and tailored to patient needs. ASCO will release a draft framework for public comment later this year before finalizing.

ASCO also continues to support the need to incentivize biomedical innovation. Our goal is to ensure both continued innovation and access to quality care for all our patients.

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**About ASCO**

Founded in 1964, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world’s leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 35,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. ASCO is supported by its affiliate organization, the Conquer Cancer Foundation, which funds ground-breaking research and programs that make a tangible difference in the lives of people with cancer. For ASCO information and resources, visit [www.asco.org](http://www.asco.org). Patient-oriented cancer information is available at [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net). For the latest cancer-related policy developments, please visit [ascoaction.asco.org](http://ascoaction.asco.org).

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**References:**

1.  *Innovation in Cancer Care and Implications for Health Systems*, IMS Institute for Healthcare Informatics, May 6, 2014.


