ASCO, ACS CAN Call on Congress to Fund Research, Expand Access to Clinical Trials, and Improve Care for Patients with Cancer

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Washington, DC – Today, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) will host a joint reception on Capitol Hill for Members of Congress to underscore the two organizations’ shared policy priorities to improve research and cancer care delivery for patients and cancer survivors.

“Congress plays an essential role in our nation’s ability to reduce death and suffering from cancer,” said Lisa Lacasse, President of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). “Amplifying patient and provider voices on research and access to care issues is critical to making sure Members of Congress understand how their decisions directly affect the lives of cancer patients, survivors and their families today and long into the future.”

This year alone more than 1,762,450 new cancer cases will be diagnosed in the United States, and more than 606,880 people in the country will die from cancer.

“Our understanding of cancer and how to treat it has significantly advanced in recent years, thanks in large part to funding provided by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI),” said ASCO President-elect, Howard A. “Skip” Burris III, MD, FACP, FASCO. “However, there’s much more work to be done to improve patient access to clinical trials, and to timely, appropriate, and affordable cancer treatments. We look forward to continuing to work closely with ACS CAN and Members of Congress to improve the delivery of care for 15.5 million people living with cancer in the United States.”

During the reception, ASCO and ACS CAN released their shared priorities and called on Congress to:
Increase Federal Funding for Cancer Research

- Provide the National Institutes of Health (NIH) $41.6 billion for fiscal year 2020, including $6.5 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI)

Pass Legislation to Improve Patient Access to Clinical Trials and Cancer Care

- Pass the CLINICAL TREATMENT Act (H.R. 913) to remove barriers for Medicaid patients to enroll in clinical trials
- Pass the Palliative Care Hospice Education and Training Act (H.R. 647) to increase the workforce, promote education, and expand research on palliative care
- Pass the Cancer Drug Parity Act (H.R. 1730/S. 741) to address burdensome patient cost sharing for oral anticancer drugs
- Pass the Safe Step Act (H.R. 2279) to ensure patients with private insurance have reasonable protections against harmful step therapy practices

Work with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to Protect Patients

- Urge CMS to reject proposed changes that would allow for step therapy in Medicare Advantage plans
- Urge CMS to reject proposed changes to Medicare Part D’s six protected classes, which threatens to remove important protections for patients with serious illnesses, including cancer
- Work with CMS to ensure any policy changes considered in the Part B drug program protect patients from large out-of-pocket costs

For updates from ASCO on cancer policy news, follow ASCO in Action.


About ASCO:

Founded in 1964, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Inc. (ASCO) is committed to making a world of difference in cancer care. As the world’s leading organization of its kind, ASCO represents nearly 45,000 oncology professionals who care for people living with cancer. Through research, education, and promotion of the highest-quality patient care, ASCO works to conquer cancer and create a world where cancer is prevented or cured, and every survivor is healthy. ASCO is supported by its affiliate organization, the Conquer Cancer Foundation. Learn more at www.ASCO.org, explore patient education resources at www.Cancer.Net, and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube.

About ACS CAN

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is making cancer a top priority...
for public officials and candidates at the federal, state and local levels. ACS CAN empowers advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy change as well as legislative and regulatory solutions that will reduce the cancer burden. As the American Cancer Society’s nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN is critical to the fight for a world without cancer. For more information, visit www.fightcancer.org.