ASCO Releases Principles for Patient-Centered Healthcare Reform

Increasing Patient Access to Quality Care, Avoiding Insurance Coverage Gaps, and Screening and Prevention Services Listed as Keys to Fostering the Best Possible Cancer Care

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Alexandria, Va. – The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) released, “ASCO Principles for Patient-Centered Healthcare Reform,” seven recommendations designed to ensure access to high-quality cancer care amid the changing U.S. healthcare delivery landscape. The principles aim to assist the new Congress and Administration, so, as they consider the critical underpinnings of any healthcare reform proposal, the needs of patients facing a cancer diagnosis are met.

“As always, ASCO is committed to improving patient access and quality care and to working with policymakers to help achieve this goal,” said ASCO President Daniel F. Hayes, MD, FACP, FASCO. “As a new Administration and Congress commence their important work, we will continue to advocate for policies that reflect the current realities of today’s cancer care and ensure that patients with cancer receive the full range of services they critically need.”

As legislators weigh different healthcare reform options, ASCO offers the following recommendations as a framework for strengthening the cancer care delivery system:

- All Americans should have access to affordable and sufficient healthcare coverage regardless of their income or health status. To ensure protected access, the current ban on pre-existing condition limitations, elimination of annual and lifetime coverage caps, and maintenance of guaranteed renewability should be preserved.
- Any efforts to reform the healthcare system at the national, state, or local levels should ensure that individuals with healthcare insurance can continue to access affordable insurance without interruption.
- All individuals with cancer should have health insurance that guarantees access to high-quality cancer care that is delivered by a cancer specialist and that provides the full range of services needed by patients with cancer a timely manner.
- Policymakers should, in any policy changes, promote and protect cancer prevention and screening services, as they are key to reducing cancer mortality. Policy makers should preserve the “no copay” access to screening services that currently exists.
• All patients should have meaningful access to clinical trials, and health insurance coverage should not be a barrier to clinical trials participation.
• Current efforts to improve quality, affordability, and access to care for patients and communities through value-based reform strategies should be continued. Current efforts to improve value in healthcare should continue to be prioritized, and value-based reforms should be designed and implemented in a patient-centered way.
• Healthcare reform efforts should engage patients and providers to obtain meaningful input in order to avoid unintended consequences during implementation.

Read the full ASCO principles document.

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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 more than 40,000 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, and YouTube. Visit ascoaction.asco.org for the latest cancer policy developments. For an overview of current policy issues, read ASCO’s cancer policy issue briefs.