ASCO Statement on JAMA Study on Cancer Disparities in the U.S.

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Statement from American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) President Monica M. Bertagnolli, MD, FACS, FASCO, on the *Journal of the American Medical Association* Study, "Factors Associated with Cancer Disparities Among Low-, Medium-, and High-Income U.S. Counties"

"This study reinforces the unfortunate reality that too many Americans can’t access quality cancer care despite the progress we have made in understanding and treating the disease. All patients deserve access to high quality care, but where they live often dictates their chances of surviving cancer. Simply put, this is unacceptable.

"The study’s authors call for public health programs to target disadvantaged counties in order to reduce disparities across the U.S., and we wholeheartedly agree with this recommendation. For the past year as ASCO president, I've been traveling to underserved areas to learn more about some of the barriers patients face in accessing care. In fact, I've seen first-hand how something as simple as a full gas tank or a babysitter can make the difference in a patient's ability to get the care they need.

"The researchers also found that smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity were the strongest possible mediators of cancer disparities at the county-level. In addition to providing tobacco cessation resources for oncology providers, ASCO has been working to raise awareness about the relationship between obesity and cancer and will continue to collaborate with groups within and outside of the oncology field to combat this epidemic.

"While this study is a very important step, we must continue to examine obstacles to cancer care and explore how everyone -- from policymakers to researchers to clinicians -- can help patients overcome them. We also need to make sure that cancer doctors in every single community have
the resources they need to provide top-notch care, so that every patient with cancer can benefit from the latest treatment advances."

**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](http://www.ASCO.org), explore patient education resources at [www.Cancer.Net](http://www.Cancer.Net), and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.