In 2016, ASCO issued a policy statement on the need to balance public health concerns about opioid abuse with ensuring access to opioids as a component of appropriate pain management for patients and survivors of cancer. Recent evidence suggests that access challenges are growing.

**OPIOIDS ARE FREQUENTLY NEEDED TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE CANCER PAIN.**

8 OUT OF 10 patients with advanced cancer have moderate to severe pain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Chronic Cancer-Related Pain</th>
<th>Use Opioids to Manage Their Pain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IN THE WAKE OF POLICIES INTENDED TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID CRISIS, IT HAS BECOME HARDER FOR CANCER PATIENTS TO ACCESS THE PAIN TREATMENT THEY NEED.**

40% of U.S. oncology practices say their patients had trouble filling opioid prescriptions. Barriers included:

- Prior authorization and/or precertification required
- Limits on number of pills per prescription
- Caps on maximum dosage
- Medication unavailable at local pharmacy
- Patients often need hard copy of prescription
- Inability to e-prescribe these drugs in some states

**GROWING BARRIERS TO ACCESS**

- Insurance coverage denied: 30% (2016), 32% (2018)
- Refills required at a single pharmacy: 11% (2016), 14% (2018)
- Limited number of refills: 30% (2016), 21% (2018)

**PATIENTS WITH CANCER NEED ACCESS TO OPIOIDS THAT IS NOT UNDULY RESTRICTED.**

92% of U.S. oncology practices are concerned that restrictions on opioid prescribing will result in undertreating cancer pain.

73% of Americans say new opioid regulations should not apply to cancer patients.

**ASCO IS WORKING WITH LAWMAKERS TO ENSURE THAT ANY NEW POLICIES WILL PRESERVE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL PAIN MEDICATIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH CANCER.**

*SOURCES:

*n=340 Practices