The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) received support from Lilly Oncology to survey its membership about key trends and nationwide developments in the business of cancer care. Here are highlights from ACCC’s 2014 Trends in Cancer Programs survey specific to financial advocacy. For additional information about the survey, go to www.accc-cancer.org.

Are We Meeting the Needs of Our Cancer Patients?

Despite recent studies showing that patients want to know how much their cancer treatment will cost them and that many are concerned about the cost of their treatment, respondents say that only 43% of physicians take cost into account during the treatment planning process; 39% report that physicians do NOT take cost into account when planning the treatment regimen.

How Often Do Your Patients Ask About the Cost of Treatment Prior to Starting on a Treatment Regimen?

- 23% of programs report that patients “frequently” ask for more affordable treatment options, compared to 19% of cancer programs that say patients “almost never” ask for more affordable options.

One Survey Respondent Says...

“Patient affordability continues to be an issue. Co-pays, co-insurance charges, and transportation are areas of continued need.”

What Percentage of Your Patients Are Unable to Pay for Treatment?

- 36% report seeing more uninsured patients in the last 12 months—underinsured patients are on the rise. More than half of respondents (54%) report seeing more underinsured patients in the last 12 months.
Financial Advocacy—A Growing Field

90% of cancer programs now offer financial assistance services. 84% of programs employ “financial specialists” on staff. 14% of programs use third-party commercial financial assistance specialists that charge for services.

Which Staff Member Performs Financial Advocacy Services?

- 84% Financial specialist
- 26% Reimbursement specialist
- 10% Oncology nurse navigator
- 6% Oncology social worker
- 10% Other (front office staff, pharmacy staff, patient advocates)

Where Do Patients Receive Financial Advocacy Support?

- 84% Pharmaceutical patient assistance programs
- 61% Advocacy organizations, such as the Patient Advocate Foundation
- 47% Non-profit organizations, such as NeedyMeds

Generosity at Work

68% of respondents say that their program has a foundation or philanthropic organization to “help meet their patients’ financial needs” by paying for...

- 74% Transportation
- 54% Co-pay amounts
- 50% Household bills
- 46% Insurance deductibles
- 40% Food
- 22% Childcare
- 10% Other (lodging, housing, screenings, etc.)

Financial Advocacy Services, Percentage of Programs That…

- 86% Research prior authorization needs
- 85% Help patients access pharmaceutical patient assistance programs
- 83% Assess patient eligibility for federal or state assistance
- 82% Help patients access co-pay assistance programs
- 80% Verify insurance benefits
- 77% Research community resources
- 71% Answer insurance and billing questions
- 71% Help patients access foundation assistance
- 70% Verify patient out-of-pocket costs
- 65% Identify financial barriers to treatment
- 62% Develop payment plans with patients
- 55% Assist with medical necessity reviews
- 55% Assist with claims and denials

Association of Community Cancer Centers

ACCC's Financial Advocacy Network project is supported by