

# Advocacy Now!

BY JENNIE R. CREWS, MD, MMM, FACP



**A**s we head into a New Year with a new Administration in the White House, we can be certain that now more than ever the oncology community must continue to be the strong, clear voice

for access to quality cancer care delivery in all settings of care.


Looking back over the past months, we can feel proud of the Association of Community Cancers Centers' role in advocating for cancer care providers, their patients, and cancer programs—small and large—serving communities across the nation. As we continue to face the emerging challenges of transitioning to new payment models, ACCC advocacy is there. Among our advocacy successes in 2016:

- Launching the ACCC Oncology Care Model (OCM) Collaborative online community, helping practices and programs through the initial challenges of participating in CMMI's Oncology Care Model.
- Meeting with elected officials on Capitol Hill, as well as CMS staff, to voice serious concerns about the agency's proposed Medicare Part B Drug Demonstration, including sharing data with policy makers on the likely impact of the ill-conceived model on oncology care. In December 2016, CMS announced it would not go forward with the proposal.
- Submitting insightful and substantive comments on MACRA, as well as the hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) and Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) proposed rules for 2017.
- Ensuring that the voice of community oncology was heard as part of Vice President Biden's Cancer Moonshot initiative. As ACCC President, not only did I have the privilege of participating in the Washington, D.C., Moonshot Summit in June, but also on a panel at the White

House announcement of the Cancer Moonshot Blue Ribbon Panel Report recommendations.

- And on Jan. 11, ACCC participated in the Cancer Moonshot healthcare forum, Making Healthcare Better.
- In December 2016, the 21st Century Cures Act was signed into law, bipartisan legislation that allocates \$6.3 billion to spur the development of new drugs and devices, and fund the Precision Medicine Initiative, as well as the Cancer Moonshot initiative to speed cancer research—all critical to advancing cancer care.
- Advocating for appropriate payment rates in response to Congressional efforts to equalize payments between physician offices and hospital outpatient departments.

As we move into 2017, we face a host of unknowns. What changes are ahead for cancer care? The ACA? The shift to a value-based healthcare system? At the same time, there are certainties that we can depend on—we can be certain that advocacy on behalf of community cancer care and the patients and families we serve is more critical than ever before.

As we've seen over the past months, our advocacy efforts can effect change. I urge you to take action and join us in Washington, D.C., on March 29, 2017, for ACCC Capitol Hill Day. ACCC offers training and support to help you share your cancer program's story with lawmakers so that they understand how policy is impacting those on the frontlines of cancer care delivery in their home communities. Then plan to attend the ACCC 43rd Annual Meeting, CANCERSCAPE, where you will gain an insider's perspective on policy changes likely to impact your cancer program's future. It looks to be an exciting year ahead, and I urge our members to stay engaged on the policy front so that ACCC—and its members—remain at the forefront of healthcare reform. 

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- ▶ Expanding Access to Immunotherapy in the Community Setting
- ▶ Developing a Nurse Practitioner Productivity Measurement Tool
- ▶ Advancing Breast Cancer Care & Survivorship Through a Peer Mentor Program
- ▶ Developing a Pathway to Identify Women at Increased Risk for Breast Cancer & Provide Personalized Management & Risk Reduction
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