

# ISSUES

## Make Your Voice Heard at ACCC Capitol Hill Day

BY BLAIR BURNETT



Every two years American voters go to the polls to participate in national elections. This fall's mid-term elections resulted in a major paradigm shift and an entirely different congressional class. With this shake-up in Washington, D.C., new voices are demanding to be heard. Make yours one of them.

Each year, in conjunction with the ACCC Annual Meeting and Cancer Center Business Summit, we bring dozens of ACCC members to Washington, D.C., for our Capitol Hill Day. Across the board, these members have enjoyed this unique opportunity to meet with their legislators and congressional staffers and talk about the challenges—and successes—at their cancer programs or practices. Most importantly, our members share how much they value these in-person meetings so that they can advocate on behalf of cancer patients and their families.

So why is it more important than ever to attend ACCC Capitol Hill Day in 2019? Over the past year and a half, this country has seen large shifts in health policy as both the Trump Administration and Congress examine the best way to address healthcare reform. Oncology as a specialty is not immune to these major changes, as we have already seen through the Administration's drug pricing reform proposals. For example, in October the Trump Administration released a three-pronged proposal to overhaul Medicare Part B and tackle rising drug costs with the expectation that a formal proposed rule would be released in spring 2019. ACCC has expressed overarching concerns about the impact of this proposal on the entire cancer care delivery infrastructure and, in particular, those programs and practices that see a high percentage of Medicare, Medicare-only, and dual-eligible patients. If you missed our

webinar on this topic, you can view the webinar on-demand and access the presentation slides at [mynetwork.accc-cancer.org/viewdocument/december-5-2018-webinar-medicare](http://mynetwork.accc-cancer.org/viewdocument/december-5-2018-webinar-medicare).

Then in November, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced a proposed rule to amend the Medicare Advantage program (Part C) and Prescription Drug Benefit program (Part D). Top-line takeaways from the proposed rule include:


- Proposed reform to Medicare Part D's "protected" therapeutic classes.
- A new requirement in Medicare Part D to allow for increased transparency between patient and provider with provision of out-of-pocket cost obligations for prescription drugs whenever a prescription is written.
- A continued push to allow for and implement "step therapy" in Medicare Advantage plans for Part B drugs. The proposed rule also states the potential to infuse prior authorizations within this pool as well.
- Proposed implementation of a "statutory requirement" that would prohibit pharmacy gag clauses in Part D.

In December, ACCC issued a policy statement expressing deep concerns regarding the impact of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' proposed Medicare Advantage and Part D rule on the country's oncology care delivery infrastructure.

As you can see, healthcare delivery is at a crossroads. It is critical that those on the frontlines of cancer care provide input on where we go next to protect patient access to quality cancer care. ACCC's annual Capitol Hill Day is organized so that participants have face-to-face meetings to share their perspectives and advocate on behalf of their patients and their cancer programs. In 2018

ACCC members representing 26 states walked the halls of the House and Senate, participating in nearly 100 congressional meetings. Participants addressed legislative efforts and the impact that new mandates would have on cancer care delivery in their home communities.

Due in part to ACCC member advocacy before, during, and after the 2018 ACCC Capitol Hill Day, we were proud to see the Palliative Care & Hospice Education Training Act (H.R. 1676/S. 693) move to the Senate, signaling a push toward more comprehensive access to palliative care in the years to come. This year, we are in a new legislative session with dozens of newly elected legislators to engage. Taking time away from your program or practice to attend is a scheduling feat, but know that your story and your patients' stories make a difference. Legislative action and the policies that shape oncology delivery do not happen in a vacuum. Adding your voice to your fellow ACCC members will help leverage the challenges and solutions you experience daily at your program or practice to become a catalyst for positive change.

ACCC makes it easy to participate. Everyone who attends the 2019 ACCC Capitol Hill Day will receive an orientation and hands-on training. You'll know what to expect and be well prepared for your scheduled visits with your legislators and their staff. For more information, go to [accc-cancer.org/capitolhillday](http://accc-cancer.org/capitolhillday) or email [bburnett@accc-cancer.org](mailto:bburnett@accc-cancer.org). We look forward to welcoming you to Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, Mar. 20, 2019, and advocating together on behalf of all patients with cancer and their families. 

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