

action

ACCC Hosts First Virtual Hill Day

On May 12, 2021, ACCC hosted its 2021 Virtual Hill Day. Forty-three members from 24 states attended more than 70 meetings with U.S. House and U.S. Senate offices. ACCC member participants came from all different backgrounds and included physicians, financial advocates, social workers, nurses, pharmacists, and cancer program administrators.

In the past, ACCC Hill Day has been an in-person event held in conjunction with the ACCC Annual Meeting and Cancer Center Business Summit. With restrictions on in-person visits to federal buildings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ACCC decided to bring this experience to a virtual format. Pivoting to a virtual format allowed members who were unable to travel in previous years the opportunity to engage with policymakers from their state at a federal level.

To help prepare its members, ACCC hosted two webinars, one in April and one in May, with training on the ACCC policy and advocacy platform, how to interact with policymakers at legislative meetings, and key “asks” for the ACCC 2021 Virtual Hill Day. Other tools ACCC developed and provided to Virtual Hill Day participants include:

- One-pagers on each “ask,” including the main points of each Congressional bill.
- A sample script of how a meeting with a congressional office typically goes, including talking points.
- A sample thank-you note that members could personalize and send after their virtual meetings to thank legislative offices for their time and remind them of the key advocacy points discussed.
- A social media toolkit to share their advocacy efforts via Twitter and LinkedIn.

The two keys “asks” at the ACCC 2021 Virtual Hill Day were:

- Support for the Telehealth Modernization Act (H.R. 1332/S.368). Prior to COVID-19, telehealth services were largely non-reimbursable and restricted to the use of patients in remote and rural areas who had existing relationships with a medical provider. New policies enacted in response to the pandemic allowed providers to offer telehealth services to patients living outside of designated rural areas and across state lines. This bipartisan legislation addresses concerns about the continuity of telehealth after the pandemic resolves and proposes to extend telehealth flexibilities, such as “permanently removing Medicare’s geographic and originating site restrictions, which require a patient to live in a rural area and be physically in a doctor’s office or clinic to use telehealth services.”



- Support for the Safe Step Act (H.R. 2163/S. 464). The use of step therapy for people with cancer is inappropriate, creating barriers to appropriate, necessary, and timely care. This bipartisan legislation would require ERISA governed health plans—that is, group health plans or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan—that provide coverage of a prescription drug pursuant to a medication step therapy protocol, “to implement a clear and transparent process for a participant or beneficiary (or the prescribing healthcare provider on behalf of the participant or beneficiary) to request an exception to such medication step therapy protocol.”

If time was available during their legislative meetings, ACCC members were asked to advocate for three additional issues:

- Support for the Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act (H.R. 2144/S.1450).
- Support for the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act (H.R. 869/S.289).
- Support for the Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act of 2021 (H.R. 1946).

A Reminder from ACCC’s Bylaws Committee

Dec. 1, 2021, is the deadline for submission of any proposed amendments to the ACCC bylaws. Proposed recommendations should be sent to Betsy Spruill at bspruill@acc-cancer.org. The ACCC bylaws are available online at: acc-cancer.org/bylaws.