

2024 ACCC Hill Day

BY CJ IKE



On February 28, a day before the ACCC 50th Annual Meeting & Cancer Center Business Summit (#AMCCBS), ACCC members traveled to Capitol Hill for the Association's first in-person Hill Day in 5 years. Understanding the importance and influence of policy to delivering comprehensive cancer care, ACCC concentrated its advocacy efforts on 4 integral issues identified by its membership and the patients they serve:

- Oncology drug shortages
- Financial toxicity
- Oncology patient navigation
- The Inflation Reduction Act.

Oncology Drug Shortages

"Therapies are so expensive, and we want to make sure we keep cancer care affordable and accessible to patients," said Sarah Hudson-DiSalle, PharmD, RPh, assistant director of Infusion Reimbursement Services at the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital at The Ohio State University, in a conversation with Matthew Williams, correspondence manager for Senator James David Vance (R-OH). "That takes everyone, and we want to ensure we are providing solutions for the issues the cancer care continuum faces."

Dr. Hudson-DiSalle explained to Williams that in 2023, the U.S. experienced the highest rate of drug shortages in its modern history and expressed ACCC's desire to develop a solution. "We want to fix it systematically...at the root of the cause and would like to partner with Senator Vance on some initiatives."

Williams shared Dr. Hudson-DiSalle's desire to collaboratively develop initiatives that prevent or at the very least minimize the effects of future oncology drug shortages. "The system

needs streamlined, coordinated communication processes...and I think we can have a fruitful relationship," Williams said.

To address the oncology drug shortage, ACCC asks that Congress use the Association's 41,000+ membership as a resource. Further, ACCC requests that Congress identify, evaluate, and propose transparent policies to address future drug shortages when they occur.

Financial Toxicity + Patient Navigation

Among The Hill Day contingent were members of the Financial Advocacy Network (FAN) sub-committee. They shared compelling stories that highlighted the effects of financial

toxicity and the expressed the need for patient navigation.

Other members of the FAN sub-committee shared the value of oncology patient navigation with Members of Congress. Angie Santiago, CRCS, senior business manager, Medical Oncology, Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson Health, and Aimee Hoch, MSW, LSW, OSW-C, oncology financial navigator, Grand View Health Cancer Center, met with the offices of Senator John Fetterman (D-PA), and Congressman Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania's 2ND district, to share their excitement for the new Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System patient navigation codes. These codes went into effect on January 1,



Hudson-DiSalle (left) and Williams (right).


2024, and represent a historic new level of Medicare reimbursement for patient navigation services.

Inflation Reduction Act

President Joseph Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) into law on August 16, 2022.¹ The law contains multiple provisions aimed at reducing prescription drug prices and costs for patients. Further, it sought to lower prescription drug spending in the federal Medicare program. Some of the IRA's drug pricing-related provisions include:

- Medicare Part D benefit redesign with a cap on beneficiary out-of-pocket-costs
- Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program (Medicare Part D Effective in 2026 and Part B Effective in 2028)
- Rebates to Medicare: pharmaceutical manufacturers must pay rebates to Medicare if prices for Medicare Part B or Part D rise faster than inflation.²

ACCC believes the IRA's Drug Pricing, Medicare Part D Benefit Redesign, and Medicare Part B and D rebate provisions have the potential to provide real savings for Medicare beneficiaries. Consequently, ACCC asks that Congress, together with policymakers at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, continue to listen to healthcare providers and patients as IRA implementation moves forward.

In conclusion, ACCC members shared with their respective representatives that the Association has endorsed the Protecting Patient Access to Cancer and Complex Therapies Act (S.2764/H.R.5391). This proposed legislation seeks to mitigate the impact of any reduced Medicare reimbursement under Medicare Part B on the providers and healthcare organizations that administer such therapies—including programs serving patients with cancer. 

CJ Ike is ACCC associate editor, Rockville, Maryland.

References

1. Inflation Reduction Act. U.S Department of the Treasury. Inflation Reduction Act. Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/inflation-reduction-act>



(Left to right) Molly Kisiel, MSN, FNP-BC, ACCC director of Clinical Content; Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-GA); and Francinna Scott-Jones, CPAR, ROCC, FACCC, a financial coordinator at Northside Hospital Cancer Institute.



(Left to right) Hoch, Santiago, Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Rifeta Kajdić Hodžić, a senior program manager at ACCC.

2. CMS Releases Revised Guidance for Medicare Prescription Drug Inflation Rebate Program. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. December 14, 2023. Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/12/cms-releases-guidance-prescription-drug-inflation-rebate-program#:~:text=As%20a%20result%20of%20>

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