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Dear Dr. Oz,

As you embark on the important work of leading the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO), representing more than 50,000 physicians and other cancer care professionals, would welcome the opportunity to discuss ways we can work together to enhance the quality and efficiency of care for individuals facing cancer, including children. ASCO is dedicated to supporting and conducting research that leads to improved patient outcomes and are committed to ensuring that evidence-based practices for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer are available to all Americans.

Few agencies have more influence over the delivery of cancer care than CMS. The agency's programs and policies impact the entire cancer care continuum, from prevention and diagnostics through access to treatment and survivorship services. CMS plays a crucial role ensuring millions of Americans can access high-quality cancer care whether through Medicare or Medicaid. As you and your team consider ongoing challenges and potential policy responses, we look forward to working with you to address particularly important issues to the cancer care community, including the implementation of prior authorization reforms, continuance of telehealth flexibilities, ongoing cancer drug shortages (especially critical in the pediatric cancer patient population), and reforming the flawed Medicare payment system.

Public insurance programs play a critical role in cancer care and survivorship: according to a 2018 study, almost fifteen percent of all Medicare beneficiaries have a cancer diagnosis¹ and almost seventeen percent of cancer cases were covered by Medicaid at diagnosis.² Medicaid beneficiaries include over 2 million people with a history of cancer and 1 in 3 children newly diagnosed with cancer;³ in 2023, ten percent of adults with a history of cancer in the US relied on Medicaid for their health care.⁴

¹

[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29398469/#:~:text=Results:%20While%2014.8%25%20of%20all,%20Dhigh%20cost%20patients\).](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29398469/#:~:text=Results:%20While%2014.8%25%20of%20all,%20Dhigh%20cost%20patients).)

² <https://ascopost.com/news/january-2024/study-identifies-potential-variations-in-us-health-insurance-coverage-at-cancer-diagnosis-by-state/>

³ <https://ashpublications.org/bloodadvances/article/9/2/280/525948/Medicaid-coverage-continuity-is-associated-with>

⁴ https://www.fightcancer.org/policy-resources/medicaid-cuts-put-people-cancer-risk#_edn1

Thanks in part to the work of CMS, there are an estimated 18 million cancer survivors in America, and that number is growing.⁵ New treatments that can significantly improve both the length of and quality of life for patients with cancer means we are living in an era where many types of cancer may rightfully be considered chronic diseases. ASCO supports research that identifies long-term health complications from cancer or its treatment, discovering ways to mitigate complications and enhance quality of life for survivors.

I offer ASCO as a resource to you and your staff for expert knowledge in clinical cancer care, including ASCO's evidence-based guidelines for cancer prevention, detection and treatment, the latest and most advanced cancer research, and proven policies impacting both patients and the dedicated oncology professionals who care for them. Our staff will be in touch to arrange a time for ASCO leadership to meet with your team. We are committed to working together to improve cancer care, research, and survival. For future resources, discussions, and collaborations, ASCO's primary contact is Shimere Sherwood at shimere.sherwood@asco.org.

Sincerely,



Eric P. Winer, MD, FASCO
Association Chair of the Board

⁵ <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/cancer-treatment-and-survivorship-facts-and-figures/2022-cancer-treatment-and-survivorship-fandf-acf.pdf>