

Commentary

Community Cancer Care Preservation Act of 2007 introduced in House

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The Community Cancer Care Preservation Act of 2007 (HR 1190) has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressmen Artur Davis (D-AL) and Jim Ramstad (R-MN). This legislation seeks to achieve the promise of balanced reform for cancer as pledged by the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA). A Senate version of the bill will be introduced in the near future.

HR 1190 addresses six of the eight points that the Community Oncology Alliance (COA) has outlined for its 2008 agenda, including:

- Removing prompt pay discounts from inclusion in the calculation of average selling price (ASP).
- Shortening the two-quarter time lag for ASP calculation of price increases to a maximum of 2 months.
- Increasing payment for the first hour of chemotherapy by 32%.
- Restoring the subsequent hour of chemotherapy to a rate equal to 70% of the first hour.
- Creating a pharmacy facility code that begins at 2% of the cost of the drug and is eventually converted to a relative value unit (RVU) code. The transition to RVUs will be budget neutral.
- Creating two oncology treatment planning codes: "moderate" and "complex."

PriceWaterhouseCoopers continues to report that MMA overcorrected cancer care by more than 3 times Congressional intent. The latest analysis shows reductions in cancer care reimbursement of \$14.7 billion over 10 years. Congress

had intended to save \$4.2 billion.

COA continues to advocate that Medicare overcorrected reimbursement on drugs and undercorrected reimbursement for essential services. The reimbursement for drugs has dropped 24.7% since 2004 (over 35% since 2003). Meanwhile, reimbursement for services essential to delivering quality chemotherapy has declined 24.2% since 2004.

COA believes strongly that the Community Cancer Care Preservation Act will restore balance to MMA. The involvement of key Congressmen Davis and Ramstad demonstrates the importance that this issue has for both parties. Both men are members of the powerful House Ways

& Means Committee, which oversees economic policy in a variety of areas, including healthcare and Medicare.

COA is encouraging a massive outreach to members of the House asking them to co-sponsor HR 1190. Clinic staff and patients are encouraged to call their members of Congress and urge them to co-sponsor this legislation.

Phone numbers for members of Congress can be obtained at COA's Web site, www.communityoncology.org (click on the Legislative Action Center link on the bottom red bar) or go to www.House.gov.

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