



COMMUNITY ONCOLOGY ALLIANCE



COA BREAKING NEWS

March 1, 2013

Sequestration Starts Today -- CMS Will Make Medicare Provider Cuts in 30 Days. Includes Possible Severe Drug Reimbursement Cut.

The much-debated sequester goes into effect today, Friday March 1st. On April 1st, CMS will start cutting Medicare reimbursement to providers by up to 2% across the board. No beneficiary cuts can be made under sequestration. As we have informed you prior to this, there is a lot of uncertainty regarding exactly how CMS will implement the cuts, but a 2% cut would reduce Medicare drug reimbursement from ASP + 6% to ASP + 4.3%. We know that the impact of this would be devastating for most community oncology practices. That's why COA has been talking about sequestration for some time with members of Congress and making the cancer community aware of the adverse impact of sequestration on cancer care, as well as cancer research.

Unfortunately, sequestration impacts virtually every aspect of our country's operations, from defense to education to health care. However, as daunting as sequestration is, COA has been working with other concerned entities in delivering a message to Congress: **Fight Cancer, Not Cancer Care**. This ad has been running this week in key congressional and DC daily papers, as well as the on-line versions. The ad has been very visible and makes a clear statement.

Next week we will be providing you with a message and materials to reach out to your members of Congress. We have held off from engaging the grassroots of community oncology until after the sequester has gone into effect and it is clearer how/when it will impact community oncology.

CONGRESS:
Fight Cancer.
NOT Cancer Care.

Thanks to advances in cancer care in America, lives are being saved everyday. But unfortunately, our nation is facing a crisis in cancer care that could negatively impact patient access, quality and availability of critical medications and therapies.

Financial pressures resulting from repeated cuts to Medicare reimbursement for life-saving therapies are forcing some cancer centers to shut their doors.

These closures have led to patient access challenges, clinical staff reductions and higher Medicare costs because of cancer patients seeking care in more expensive settings.

Sequestration and some deficit reduction proposals further threaten America's community cancer centers, cancer doctors and their vulnerable patients. Any more cuts to community cancer care must be stopped.

While America's cancer patients fight for their lives, let's fight to protect their community cancer care.

Logos: NPAF National Patient Advocate Foundation, The US Oncology Network, ACCG, COA, American Cancer Society, ION Solutions, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and others.

To learn more, visit www.communityoncology.org

COA is hard at work looking at every aspect of sequestration, including the legal ability of CMS to actually cut Medicare Part B drug reimbursement, which is specified in law (the MMA)

at ASP + 6%. Congress and the President may well wake up to reverse sequestration before April 1st, when cancer care will be impacted. However, the cancer community can't take the chance of that -- we have to sway political opinion and specifically stop any possible Medicare cuts to cancer drug reimbursement.

This is going to take a massive, coordinated message delivered by the cancer community, getting everyone impacted involved -- professional and administrative professionals, as well as patients, caregivers, and survivors. The future of cancer care and research is at stake. Emails and faxes to your members of Congress alone won't do it -- *you are going to have to engage members of Congress and their staff.*

Early next week we will post specific information on the [COA website](#) about reaching out to your Representatives and Senators to enlist their help in stopping CMS from making cuts to cancer care. We will also provide a tool to allow you to estimate the impact of sequestration on the Medicare portion of your practice. In the meantime, go to the current [Thoughts from COA](#) to read more about sequestration and to access the ad being run this week in support of community cancer care.

[Click here](#) to go to the COA website. Here are the links to COA on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.



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