



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Radiation oncology physician groups unite to ensure patient access to cancer care

ARLINGTON, Va., January 9, 2024 ([view online](#)) – Today, the largest professional societies representing radiation oncology physicians in the United States announced a partnership with the goal of reforming radiation oncology Medicare payments to expand and enhance access to high quality care for people with cancer. Leaders of the American College of Radiation Oncology (ACRO), the American College of Radiology (ACR), the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) stressed the need for a unified approach to create meaningful change on this critical issue.

Medicare payments for radiation therapy services have been cut by 23% since 2013, threatening patient access to cancer care in communities across the country, with further cuts likely in coming years. ACRO, ACR, ASTRO and ASCO are committed to working together to ensure that cost effective, high value cancer care services are available for Medicare beneficiaries and all patients, while positioning the specialty for innovative breakthroughs in cancer treatment for future generations. The organizations' leaders believe that payment reform is an essential path forward for the future of the specialty. Broad Congressional interest in radiation oncology and Medicare physician payment reform provide a robust backdrop for potentially transformative action this year.

ACRO President Dwight Heron, MD, MBA, FACRO, FACR, FASTRO, said, “As four of the largest groups representing innovative and comprehensive cancer care, our coalition will leverage its wealth of expertise across the spectrum of health policy and economics to ensure the practice of radiation oncology remains sustainable in both community and hospital-based settings to the benefit of cancer patients for many years to come.”

ACR Board of Chancellors Chair Jacqueline A. Bello, MD, FACR, said, "The American College of Radiology is continually working to advance and maintain a health care delivery and payment structure that enables those with cancer to access lifesaving-and-quality-of-life-improving radiation oncology care in their communities. On behalf of our many radiation oncologist members and the patients we serve, the ACR is proud to work with ASTRO, ACRO and ASCO to move this important effort forward."

ASTRO Chair Jeff M. Michalski, MD, MBA, FASTRO, added, “ASTRO welcomes this partnership with ACRO, ACR and ASCO knowing that as a united discipline, we can achieve lasting reform for radiation oncologists and our patients.”

ASCO Board Chair, Everett Vokes, MD, FASCO, said, “The Association for Clinical Oncology supports collaboration across the cancer community and with policymakers toward needed payment reform that supports patient access to high-quality, equitable cancer care.”

ASTRO's [Radiation Oncology Case Rate](#) program (ROCR) seeks to address inadequacies of the current payment system. The societies are seeking input from their members and other stakeholders on payment

reform, as they ask policymakers to address the urgent threat facing cancer treatment access. They are committed to supporting radiation oncology professionals, both in hospital and freestanding office settings, to secure fair, stable reimbursement. Payment reform in radiation oncology also must address disparities faced by patients in rural and underserved communities.

The groups' leaders expressed confidence that their partnership will ensure continued access close to home to compassionate, technologically advanced, life-saving treatments for patients diagnosed with cancer. They also expressed a commitment to this important advocacy initiative to protect and enhance access to radiation therapy services for patients today and tomorrow.

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For media-related questions, contact press@astro.org.