



The US Oncology Network Submits Letter to HHS Inspector General Requesting Flexibilities for Patient Travel

Flexibilities Would Enable Practices to Provide Financial Assistance for Patient Travel

On April 9, The US Oncology Network submitted a letter to Principal Deputy Inspector General Christi Grimm asking the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) to consider temporarily suspending enforcement of certain requirements related to patient travel under the federal Anti-Kickback Statute during the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

While Network practice locations are intentionally selected to provide patients with access to care close to home, several sites have closed temporarily to undergo mitigation efforts due to COVID-19 exposure. This has caused some patients who are mid-treatment to travel further to receive care. Unfortunately, federal regulations currently limit practices in their ability to provide financial assistance for patients traveling over a certain distance.

“Amidst the ongoing public health crisis, The Network remains committed to its vision of expanding patient access to the highest quality, most cost-effective, integrated cancer care to help patients on their cancer journey,” The Network letter states. “Providing these flexibilities on a temporary basis would help ensure cancer patients can continue their treatments in a safe environment with as little disruption as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In a message from the HHS OIG dated March 30, the agency noted that it “places a high priority on providing the health care community with the flexibility to provide needed care during this emergency,” and that it is “trying to minimize burdens on providers and be flexible” where it can.

To read The Network’s letter to the HHS OIG, [CLICK HERE](#).

To read the response from the HHS OIG, [CLICK HERE](#).

To read the March 30 message from the HHS OIG on minimizing burdens on providers, [CLICK HERE](#).