

August 22, 2023

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2306 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tony Cárdenas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Murphy, MD  
407 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Danny Davis  
2159 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bilirakis, Cardenas, Murphy, and Davis,

On behalf of The US Oncology Network (The Network), which represents more than 10,000 oncology physicians, nurses, clinicians, and cancer care specialists nationwide, I'm writing to express support for H.R. 3674, the Providing Relief and Stability for Medicare Patients Act of 2023. The Network appreciates your action to address recurring Medicare payment reductions to community-based medical practices that care for patients with complex, chronic conditions. Your legislation will preserve patient access to personalized cancer care treatment in freestanding radiation therapy centers by mitigating the continued payment cuts to radiation oncology and many specialty services provided in the community.

The Network is one of the nation's largest and most innovative networks of independent, community-based oncology physicians, treating more than 1.2 million cancer patients annually in more than 450 locations across 25 states. It unites over 1,400 like-minded physicians around a common vision of expanding patient access to the highest quality, state-of-the-art care close to home and at lower costs for patients and the health care system.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) updates to clinical labor pricing have hit capital-intensive medical specialties, like radiation oncology, especially hard. This policy change is being phased in over 4 years and is causing significant payment cuts to various radiation therapy services during that time period. Radiation oncologists practicing in freestanding radiation therapy centers are disproportionately affected by the continued cuts in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) caused by the clinical labor adjustments. Due to budget neutrality requirements, the increased payments for clinical labor costs strip payment from other practice expense components of the PFS, such as reimbursement for advanced medical instruments and technology. Radiation oncology, a specialty that utilizes advanced medical equipment – for example, linear accelerators for external beam radiation; CT and MRI for image-guided radiation therapy and intensity modulated radiation therapy; and CyberKnife to perform stereotactic body radiation therapy – is severely threatened by these repeated cuts to Medicare payment. This advanced medical equipment is an essential element to treating the complex and devastating cancers that our patients are fighting.

The cuts exacerbate the existing payment disparity between physician office setting and the hospital setting that has incentivized consolidation. They also are being phased-in at a time when physician offices are already experiencing considerable fiscal uncertainties related to inflation, rising practice expenses and increased staffing and equipment costs. These payment cuts jeopardize the financial viability of many office-based physician practices, which is putting patient access to care in the most cost-effective setting at risk.

H.R. 3674 would provide targeted relief for these practices by providing an increase to the non-facility practice relative value units (PE RVU's) for those procedures performed in an office-based setting. Your legislation recognizes and values the use of advanced medical devices and medical equipment in the delivery of personalized cancer treatment. The Network, radiation oncologists, patients receiving treatment and their caregivers appreciate your leadership and efforts to preserve access to high-quality, timely, cost-effective cancer care close to patients' homes and support networks.

We look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation. Further, we welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues outlined above and any other issues impacting community cancer care with you or your staff. Should you have any questions, please contact Ben Jones, Vice President of Government Relations and Public Policy, at [Ben.Jones@usoncology.com](mailto:Ben.Jones@usoncology.com).

Sincerely,



Vivek S. Kavadi, MD, MBA, FASTRO  
Chief Radiation Oncology Officer  
The US Oncology Network