

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON PATIENT ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE CANCER THERAPIES

Breakthroughs in more precise and targeted therapies now make it possible to treat cancers more effectively and extend people's lives.

Yet, many patients don't benefit from these innovations.

INSURANCE PRACTICES LIMIT ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE TREATMENTS

Ready access to innovative cancer treatments is not assured due to rising copays and restrictions used by health insurance plans to control costs.



STEP THERAPY

By requiring patients to take one or more less expensive cancer drugs before the insurance company will agree to pay for the therapy prescribed by their doctor, this process denies patients the drugs they need when they need them and may lead to adverse outcomes.



SPECIALTY TIERS

Insurers may put a new cancer medicine into the highest pharmacy ("specialty") tier, requiring patients to pay a percentage of the drug's price, from 25% up to more than 70%.



UPCOMING CHANGES IN MEDICARE

Proposed rules and other potential payment reforms within Medicare could change how doctors are reimbursed. These changes could impact patient access to innovative therapies.



DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR ORAL CANCER THERAPIES

Medicare and private insurance plans can put up to 25% of the cost of oral cancer therapies on the responsibility of patients, preventing many from filling their prescriptions. Laws passed in 40 states and the District of Columbia now require health plans to cover oral and injectable therapies equitably.



RESTRICTIVE CLINICAL PATHWAYS

While patient-focused pathways allow doctors and patients to weigh different treatment choices, others restrict options to a predetermined list of drug regimens or require prior authorization from the health plan to receive a different treatment.

LACK OF TRANSPORTATION LIMITS ACCESS TO QUALITY CANCER CARE

Without reliable transportation, it is more difficult for patients to see their oncologist and receive quality cancer care.



Patients who ride the bus to see a doctor are **twice as likely** to miss an appointment as those with access to a car.



Patients with transportation difficulties miss filling prescriptions more than **twice as often** as patients without these problems.



In rural areas with limited public transportation systems, cancer patients may drive up to **300 miles** one way for screening or treatment.



Lack of transportation hits minority Americans undergoing cancer treatment especially hard. In one study, **55% of African American** and **60% of Hispanic patients** had transportation problems compared to **38% of Caucasian patients**.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If the benefits of innovation are to be realized, policies that ensure patients have access to novel medicines are a necessity. Otherwise, when breakthrough cancer treatments reach the market, patients won't be able to take them.

 PROJECT INNOVATION

projectinnovation.org



Sources:

Guidry JJ, et al. Transportation as a Barrier to Cancer Treatment. *Cancer Practice*. 1997;5(6):361-366

National Cancer Institute- Voice of a Broken System: Real People, Real Problems, 2001

National Patient Advocate Foundation. Policy Principles 2016

Samina TS, et al. Traveling Towards Disease: Transportation Barriers to Health Care Access. *J Community Health*. 2013 Oct; 38(5):976-993