

## 2024 Legislative Priorities

### Innovate Medicare payments:

Radiation oncology is an extremely high value service for Medicare beneficiaries, particularly when compared to oncology drug spending. Yet, Medicare reimbursement rates for radiation therapy have been cut 23% since 2013, making it tougher for cancer patients to receive state-of-the-art care close to home. Combined with rising inflation and increasing costs, radiation oncology centers, and especially freestanding community-based centers, have faced significant instability that threatens their continued ability to hire essential non-physician staff and treat patients.

The Radiation Oncology Case Rate (ROCR) proposal will protect and enhance access to radiation therapy services for Medicare beneficiaries by shifting from volume-based to value-based. The ROCR program will reduce disparities for patients in underserved and rural communities and improve upon already outstanding quality. Payment reform cannot wait, because without legislating ROCR, and finally decoupling RO payments from volume, patients will lose access to critical care.

### Preserve patient access:

Barriers to providing care, particularly prior authorization delays, disrupt prompt treatment delivery for cancer patients and infringe on the integrity of care decisions between patients and providers. More than 90% of radiation oncologists say prior authorization delays cancer treatment and research shows that delays increase cancer mortality.

### Reinvest in cancer research:

While there have been massive hurdles to any government funding proposal, Congress has a bipartisan record of longstanding support for cancer research. Sustained investment in the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) allows our members to provide the best treatment options for patients, while flat or decreased funding will reduce the number of researchers, leave essential trials in indeterminate suspension, and ultimately stifle progress in the fight against cancer.