ASTRO joins national launch of Health Care Payment Learning and Action Network (HCPLAN) today

ASTRO’s participation in HCPLAN will help lead to meaningful, system-wide payment and delivery system reforms

Fairfax, Va., March 25, 2015 – The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) leadership participated in today’s launch of the new Health Care Payment Learning and Action Network (HCPLAN) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) at an event featuring President Obama and HHS Secretary Burwell. HCPLAN is designed to inform and enable system-wide improvement of Medicare’s payment structure. Secretary Burwell has set ambitious goals of tying Medicare payments to quality or value—30 percent by the end of 2016 and 50 percent by the end of 2018. Alternative payment models could include Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), patient-centered medical homes or bundled payment arrangements. HCPLAN will facilitate a more rapid transition to alternative payment models based on value and quality, which is critical in realigning Medicare with greater fiscal responsibility that provides better care for healthier Americans.

“ASTRO is eager to work with HHS to support necessary improvements in payment and delivery practices to benefit the millions of cancer patients treated each year by the valuable radiation oncology care team,” said ASTRO CEO Laura I. Thevenot. “We are hard at-work developing viable, meaningful and patient-centered changes that maintain the highest quality of radiation oncology care and identifying opportunities to reduce costs. ASTRO is committed to achieving the goals set by President Obama and Secretary Burwell.”

ASTRO launched a three-phase payment reform action plan in 2013. The first phase encompasses the revision of the radiation oncology code set, which represents approximately 50 percent of radiation oncology’s total reimbursement from the physician fee schedule. The second phase is the launch of a comprehensive radiation oncology practice accreditation program called APEX, Accreditation Program for Excellence.
Radiation oncology practices have already begun the enrollment and assessment process, and APEx-accredited centers will represent the highest standard of radiation oncology care. The third phase of ASTRO’s plan is the development of payment reform models for radiation oncology treatment and will be focused on the value and costs associated with radiation therapy. ASTRO’s models will focus on three key areas that have the highest potential for quality improvement and savings, starting with palliative radiation therapy, and evolving to focus on radiation therapy-only options and multidisciplinary care.

**ABOUT ASTRO**

ASTRO is the premier radiation oncology society in the world, with more than 10,000 members who are physicians, nurses, biologists, physicists, radiation therapists, dosimetrists and other health care professionals that specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies. As the leading organization in radiation oncology, the Society is dedicated to improving patient care through professional education and training, support for clinical practice and health policy standards, advancement of science and research, and advocacy. ASTRO publishes two medical journals, International Journal of Radiation Oncology • Biology • Physics ([www.redjournal.org](http://www.redjournal.org)) and Practical Radiation Oncology ([www.practicalradonc.org](http://www.practicalradonc.org)); developed and maintains an extensive patient website, [www.rtanswers.org](http://www.rtanswers.org); and created the Radiation Oncology Institute ([www.roinstitute.org](http://www.roinstitute.org)), a non-profit foundation to support research and education efforts around the world that enhance and confirm the critical role of radiation therapy in improving cancer treatment. To learn more about ASTRO, visit [www.astro.org](http://www.astro.org).

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