Request for Proposals

Project: Exploratory Analysis of the SEER-Medicare Dataset to Estimate the Costs of Cancer Treatment

August 9, 2013
Please respond to:
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PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES
Annual costs of cancer care are projected to rise in the coming years. ASTRO is currently proceeding forward with a comprehensive payment reform initiative to address these unsustainable rising costs. One important component of this multi-phase plan is an effort to develop alternatives to the traditional fee-for-service model. As an initial step of this effort, ASTRO wants to identify the costs of cancer care for Medicare patients by the various treatment methods. Toward this end, ASTRO is seeking technical assistance to conduct an exploratory analysis of the SEER-Medicare dataset and herein issues a request for proposals (RFP) to study this issue.

To accomplish this goal, ASTRO seeks proposals to use SEER-Medicare data that will accomplish the following goals:

- Determine the average total costs of cancer care for Medicare patients treated for selected common malignancies, with a breakdown of these total costs according to the modalities (radiation therapy vs. surgery vs. chemotherapy agents) employed in the patient’s management.
- Identify the costs of cancer-related hospitalizations, and the costs of non-cancer-related medical care.
- Identify opportunities where a re-alignment of provider incentives might lead to cost savings derived from enhanced coordination and efficiency of care among specialists involved in cancer treatment.
- Identify processes that will avoid unnecessary expenditures related to preventable hospitalizations or complications of treatment.
- Identify ways of managing patients using less costly pathways of care, or other strategies to improve productivity while maintaining the highest quality of care.

It will be most instructive to understand the magnitude and distribution of these costs within the first year after diagnosis, in the next year of management, and in the final six months of life. The total first year cost of care is defined as all claims filed for an individual in the twelve months after diagnosis of malignancy. The second year of care covers the next 12 months after diagnosis, and the final period of analysis covers the six months prior to the patient’s death.

QUALIFICATIONS/ TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS
The organization performing the analysis of the SEER-Medicare data must have:

- Access to the most recent 2-3 years of SEER data including: Medicare Provider Analysis and Review (Part A), Carrier Claims (Part B), Outpatient Claims (Part B), Home Health Agency/Hospice, and Medicare Part D Data, Part B Drug File.
- Ability to calculate an average cost of care for the following cancer sites: non-melanoma skin, lung, breast, prostate, kidney & renal, colorectal, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, thyroid, endometrial, pancreas, melanoma, and bladder.
- Ability to calculate total costs categorized according to modality used (radiotherapy, chemotherapy, surgery, or others).
- An understanding of the nuances of oncology data and coding with an emphasis on radiation oncology.

FINAL DELIVERABLES:
ASTRO is looking for a qualified organization to provide the following deliverables:

- A statistical analysis of the data with detailed information by treatment costs by modality and cancer sites is requested. An explanation of statistical methodologies utilized is also required.
- A detailed report with conclusions based on the data analysis. The aim of the final report is to provide valuable information to ASTRO’s future payment reform efforts.
• A presentation of the study’s conclusions to ASTRO staff and select leaders of the ASTRO Payment Reform workgroup will be given. This presentation can be given via Webex or other similar technology. A slide deck summarizing findings and conclusions will be required. Details on the format of the deliverable are negotiable and will be discussed once the proposal is accepted.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 pm EST, August 9, 2013.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Please submit all proposals via email to Sheila Madhani, Assistant Director of Medicare Policy: sheilam@astro.org.
BACKGROUND (PAYMENT REFORM INITIATIVE)
Because a large proportion of patients treated for cancer in the United States are in an older cohort for whom Medicare is the primary source of health care coverage, and because the annual cost of caring for these patients is projected to increase substantially in the next decade based on the anticipated increased number of Medicare beneficiaries during that time, the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) is keenly interested in understanding the economic patterns of care for Medicare patients.

These cancers are each managed with a variety of modalities, and some are managed with a relatively minor component of radiation therapy. While such cancers would not likely be the subject of payment reform proposals centered on radiation oncology-related services, nevertheless it will be informative to have an understanding of how the cost of care compares among the most common cancers occurring in the US Medicare population.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS/FORMAT
1. Title Page, to include:
   a. ASTRO RFP - Exploratory Analysis of the SEER-Medicare Dataset to Estimate Cost of Cancer Treatment.
   b. Organization Name.
   c. Organization Address.
   d. Organization Website.
   e. Organization Contact.
   f. Organization Contact Title.
   g. Organization Contact Phone.
   h. Organization Contact Fax.
   i. Organization Contact Email address.
2. Cover Letter, to include:
   a. Brief description of organization, history, and capabilities.
   b. Letter signed by the person authorized to conduct business on behalf of the organization.
3. Statement of objectives as “Specific Aims.”
4. Scope of report and example of final deliverable format including:
   a. A description or sample graphic example of tables and/or figures that will describe the analytical results.
5. Brief description of methodology.
6. Names and roles of individual project staff including a description of how the analysis team will gain insight into radiation oncology.
7. Project timeline (from implementation to completion).
8. Itemized budget to include:
   a. Anticipated data acquisition costs
   b. Costs associated with computerized data processing and statistical analysis
   c. Other anticipated personnel costs
   d. Institutional or other overhead costs.
9. References (up to 10), which may include examples of prior publications from the submitting investigator(s) on related topics
10. Other considerations
    a. **Font:** Please use fonts no smaller than 11 pt
b. **Proposal length:** The proposal should not exceed 5 single spaced pages, not including title page and cover letter but including references.

c. **Attachments.** You may provide supplementary additional information in the form of electronic copies of up to 3 documents in PDF form if applicable to the proposal as illustrations of prior work or summaries of methodological aspects.

**EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS:**
Proposals will be evaluated and ranked on the basis of ability to meet ASTRO’s information needs, local research environment infrastructure and expertise of the investigators, and timeline of completion of the work. The initial ranking will be performed by select members of the ASTRO Payment Reform Leadership Group, and a final decision for funding will be determined by the ASTRO Board of Directors. Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposals no later than September 30, 2013.

*Confidentiality of Proposals.* Submissions will be shared with ASTRO staff and member leadership for review and discussion. ASTRO will review responses to the RFP and conduct appropriate follow-up as necessary to narrow the field to a select group of finalists for the project. Follow-up may include contacting references and discussions with the prospective organization.

**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.com](http://www.roinstitute.com)), 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).

**ASTRO PROJECT STAFF**
Questions regarding the RFP should be directed to Ms. Madhani or Dr. Kavanagh:

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