

Protecting Patients in Health Care Reform

As the new Congress and Administration wrestle with policy decisions on the provision of high quality, affordable coverage, ASTRO urges policymakers to include physicians in discussions surrounding federal policies related to patient care. ASTRO recommends that the following bipartisan principles act as a guidepost for Congress as it considers alternative approaches to provide cancer patients and all Americans with quality care.



Access

- Maintain bans on pre-existing condition exclusions and annual and lifetime limit caps
- Preserve guaranteed issue and guaranteed renewability
- Access to clinical trials
- Safeguard access to cancer screening and prevention programs



Affordability

- Prohibit cost-shifting to cancer patients and providers to cover uncompensated or underfunded care
- Provide sufficient funds for public health, preventive services, and patient navigator services for cancer patients



Quality and Efficiency

- Simplify burdensome systems to reduce costs, create a more efficient system, and maximize funding for health care services
- Ensure that patient safety and quality programs improve quality and enhance the doctor/patient relationship and are meaningful to patient and physician alike



Network and Benefit Design

- Provide access to specialty care, provider choice, and the range of services that cancer patients need
- Health plans must provide useful, understandable information about health plan options, physician specialist networks, and transparent provider network participation criteria