



## Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists



May 2, 2023  
Senator Paul Feeney  
Representative James Murphy  
Chairs, Joint Committee on Financial Services  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Feeney, Chair Murphy, and Members of the Joint Committee on Financial Services,

The Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists (MSCO) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) are pleased to support H. 953/S. 609, companion bills which would take steps to protect patients with cancer in Massachusetts from copay accumulator programs.

MSCO is a statewide organization representing oncologists and physicians who provide care for cancer patients. Founded in 1985, the Society is dedicated to improving cancer care and treatment. ASCO is the world's leading professional society representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With more than 45,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that cancer patients have meaningful access to high quality, equitable cancer care.

MSCO and ASCO are committed to supporting policies that reduce cost while preserving quality of cancer care; however, it is critical that such policies be developed and implemented in a way that does not undermine patient access. Copay accumulator programs target specialty drugs for which manufacturers often provide copay assistance. With a co-pay accumulator program in place, a manufacturer's assistance no longer applies toward a patient's co-pay or out-of-pocket maximum. This policy means patients will experience increased out of pocket costs and take longer to reach required deductibles. By prohibiting these funds from counting toward patient premiums and deductibles, co-pay accumulators negate the intended benefit of patient assistance programs and remove a safety net for patients who need expensive specialty medications but cannot afford them.

Copay accumulator programs lack transparency and are often implemented without a patient's knowledge or full understanding of their new "benefit." Far from being beneficial, copay accumulator programs increase financial burden for patients, many of whom are facing life-threatening illness. The impact is especially hard on low-income populations. Increasing patient cost can contribute to medical bankruptcy and cause patients to discontinue care, seek non-medical alternatives—or forego treatment altogether. The result is poorer health outcomes and greater cost to the system.

MSCO and ASCO are encouraged by the steps H. 953/S. 609 take toward eliminating co-pay accumulator programs in Massachusetts, and we strongly urge the committee to pass the measure. For a more detailed understanding of our policy recommendations on this issue, we invite you to read the [ASCO Policy Brief on Co-Pay Accumulators](#) by our affiliate, the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Please contact Aaron Segel at [aaron.segel@asco.org](mailto:aaron.segel@asco.org) or Katy Monaco at [kmonaco@mms.org](mailto:kmonaco@mms.org) if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.



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