



April 11, 2024

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Representative Joe Solomon
Chair, House Corporations Committee
82 Smith St.
Room 135
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Miller and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

The Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is pleased to support **HB 8041**, which would take steps to protect patients with cancer in Rhode Island from co-pay accumulator programs.

ASCO is the world's leading professional society representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 50,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that cancer patients have meaningful access to high quality, equitable cancer care.

ASCO is 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. Co-pay accumulator programs target specialty drugs for which manufacturers often provide co-pay 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.

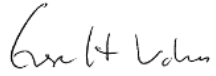
Co-pay accumulator programs lack transparency and are often implemented without a patient's knowledge or full understanding of their new "benefit." Far from being beneficial, co-pay accumulator programs increase financial burden for patients, many of whom are facing life-threatening illness. The impact 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.

We are encouraged by the steps HB 8041 takes toward eliminating co-pay accumulator programs in Rhode Island, 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 if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Everett E. Vokes, MD, FASCO
Chair of the Board
Association for Clinical Oncology