



March 26, 2026

Senator Melissa Murray, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

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

The Rhode Island Oncology Society (RIOS) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) are pleased to support **S. 2253**, which would prohibit health carriers in the state from utilizing co-pay accumulator programs and allow patients with cancer to save on their out-of-pocket costs.

RIOS 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. 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 does not apply toward a patient's co-pay or out-of-pocket maximum – **meaning patients will experience increased out-of-pocket costs and take longer to reach required deductibles and out-of-pocket limits.**

Co-pay accumulator programs allow insurers and PBMs to "double dip" by receiving the manufacturer's co-pay assistance and still requiring the patient to pay their full cost-sharing amount. The patient receives no financial benefit, while the insurer or PBM profits twice. Co-pay accumulator programs lack transparency and are often implemented without a patient's knowledge or full understanding. These programs remove a critical safety net for patients, many of whom are facing life-threatening illnesses and financial barriers to care. Many patients face prohibitive out-of-pocket expenses, with the average cost of cancer care exceeding \$42,000 in the year following diagnosis. [Research](#) has found the financial burden of care leads patients to delay prescription refills, use less medication, or skip doses entirely, ultimately leading to **poorer health outcomes and greater financial costs.**

RIOS and ASCO are encouraged by the steps S. 2253 takes toward eliminating co-pay accumulators in Rhode Island and **we strongly urge the Committee to pass it.** For a more detailed understanding of our policy recommendations on co-pay accumulator programs, we invite you to read the [ASCO Policy Brief on Co-Pay Accumulators and Co-Pay Maximizers](#). We welcome the opportunity to be a resource for you. Please contact Nick Telesco at ASCO at Nicholas.Telesco@asco.org if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Ritesh Rathore, MD
President
Rhode Island Oncology Society

Lynn M. Schuchter, MD, FASCO
Chair of the Board
Association for Clinical Oncology

The Rhode Island Oncology Society (RIOS) is a statewide professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer care by championing excellence in patient treatment, strengthening collaboration among oncology professionals, and supporting education and advocacy initiatives that enhance the quality of cancer care across Rhode Island. ASCO is the world's leading professional society representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With over 50,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that patients with cancer have meaningful access to high-quality cancer care.