

COA Asks CMMI to Extend Oncology Care Model (OCM) Through 2022

Oncologists say OCM has helped practices transform care delivery for patients, and seek extension until a successor model is named

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EINPresswire.com/ -- This week, the Community Oncology Alliance (COA) submitted a [letter](#) to the federal government asking that it immediately extend the Oncology Care Model (OCM) through December 31, 2022.

In the letter to leadership at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), COA notes that beginning to wind down the OCM starting at the end of this year without any clear reasons, or a

successor model, will waste millions of taxpayers' dollars and the successes of participating practices in transforming cancer care for patients across the country.

The tremendous financial and resource investment in the OCM, and the dramatic successes of many independent community oncology practices participating in the OCM in enhancing patient cancer care while lowering treatment costs, should be clear reasons why the OCM should not be discontinued. Rather, the model should be refined and re-envisioned based on what is working, says the letter. These practice transformations have led to many new initiatives and arrangements with payers to enhance the quality of cancer care while lowering costs.

COA President Kashyap Patel, MD, whose practice participated in the OCM, expressed concern that successful trends may revert if the OCM is canceled. "CMS and CMMI may undo years of progress improving cancer care, alleviating health disparities, and lowering costs if the OCM is



canceled. Many practices rely on the backing of the OCM for these transformations and may be forced to abandon them without it.”

Ted Okon, executive director of COA, said that community oncology’s dedication to the OCM throughout the COVID-19 pandemic alone should demonstrate its worth. “Independent community oncology practices, large and small, kept the OCM running throughout a public health emergency, a feat they were not expected to accomplish, and are being rewarded with the abrupt end of the OCM. We can do better and respect their hard work by continuing this important federal program.”

Read the full comment letter from COA requesting the OCM be extended on the [COA website](#).

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About the Community Oncology Alliance

The Community Oncology Alliance (COA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for community oncology practices and, most importantly, the patients they serve. COA is the only organization dedicated solely to community oncology where the majority of Americans with cancer are treated. The mission of COA is to ensure that patients with cancer receive quality, affordable, and accessible cancer care in their own communities. More than 1.5 million people in the United States are diagnosed with cancer each year and deaths from the disease have been steadily declining due to earlier detection, diagnosis, and treatment. Learn more about COA at communityoncology.org.

Nicolas Ferreyros

Community Oncology Alliance (COA)

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