

Sequestration Poses Triple Threat to Cancer Patients

ASCO Calls on Congress to Avoid Looming “Fiscal Cliff”

Alexandria, VA—As Congress reconvenes today for its lame duck session, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) calls on lawmakers to prevent devastating budget cuts to cancer care, research, and the drug review process citing the negative impact to millions of individuals who have cancer. The mandated cuts, known as “sequestration” under the Budget Control Act, will automatically go into effect on January 1, 2013—unless Congress acts.

ASCO warns the sequestration cuts to cancer research, oncology practices, and the drug review process will affect the 1.6 million individuals newly diagnosed with cancer each year, 12 million Americans living with cancer, and many millions more who will receive a cancer diagnosis over the next decade.

“Cancer patients face a triple threat from the specter of these budget reductions,” said ASCO President Sandra M. Swain, MD, FACP. “Not only will critical cancer research sustain a devastating hit, but providers of cancer care who are already struggling to keep their practices open will be faced with significant cuts that will impede access to care. Sequestration will also hinder the federal review and oversight of new oncology treatments.”

According to an [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\)](#), sequestration will reduce the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration budgets each by 8.2 percent (about \$2.5 billion and \$318 million, respectively) and Medicare payments to physicians by two percent (more than \$11 billion) beginning in January 2013.

“We urge Congress to consider the millions of cancer patients who will be pushed over the edge of the “fiscal cliff” if action isn’t taken,” said Swain. “Our country cannot afford to slow the tremendous progress that has occurred in cancer research and treatment. Lives depend on it.”

Additional information about ASCO policy priorities may be found at <http://ascoaction.asco.org>.

#

About ASCO

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world’s leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With more than 30,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. For ASCO information and resources, visit www.asco.org/presscenter. Patient-oriented cancer information is available at www.cancer.net.