

Navigating Financial Advocacy: Overcoming Barriers to Alleviate Financial Toxicity in Cancer Care

Rifeta Kajdic Hodzic, CHPM¹; Heather Simpson, BCPA²; Jordan Karwedsky, FACCC³; Angie Santiago, BBA, CRCS, FACCC⁴; Brittany McArn, OPN-CG, CPPN⁵; Aimee Hoch, MSW, LSW, OSW-C, FACCC⁶; Christi Miller, BBA⁷; Arnela Kajdic Tarantino, CTFC, FACCC⁸; Nicole Colwell, MD¹; Emily Hope Carroll, MHA¹; Molly Kisiel, MSN, FNP-BC¹; Ashley Lile, MPH¹; Elana Plotkin, CMP-HC¹

¹Association of Cancer Care Centers, Rockville, MD; ²Allina Health Cancer Institute, River Falls, WI; ³Green Bay Oncology, Green Bay, WI; ⁴Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, Philadelphia, PA;

⁵FirstHealth of the Carolinas, Inc, Pinehurst, NC; ⁶Grand View Health, Sellersville, PA; ⁷Bon Secours Mercy Health, Greenville, SC; ⁸St. Luke's Cancer Institute, Boise, ID



INTRODUCTION

The financial burden experienced by patients with cancer, known as financial toxicity, can have severe consequences for treatment adherence and overall health outcomes. Financial advocates help to alleviate financial toxicity by assisting with shared decision-making and facilitating cost planning for treatment. In 2024, the Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC) investigated how financial advocates engage in conversations with patients undergoing cancer treatment.

METHODS

ACCC sought to identify key obstacles to effective discussions that address financial toxicity and overcome barriers to treatment access. To support this effort, ACCC collaborated with an expert multidisciplinary advisory committee from the Financial Advocacy Network to conduct a roundtable focused on improving patient-centered financial conversations.

The discussion addressed challenges in:

Delivering financial advocacy services

Navigating financial obstacles to care

Implementing strategies for alleviating financial toxicity.

RESULTS

32 registered participants attended the session.



50%
were financial navigators and counselors



23%
were cancer program administrators



3%
were oncology social workers



3%
were nurse navigators

*21% of participants comprised other disciplines (eg, nurses, physicians, coordinators).

Attendees identified 3 key practices for financial navigators to apply:



Behavioral skills: Acknowledging emotions is key to developing trust, in addition to understanding the patient's perspective while displaying cultural awareness and empathy.



Correct and clear documentation: Preparing patient documentation that is easy-to-follow helps to summarize and confirm the patient's understanding.



Financial toxicity screening: Clearly defining all stages of the financial process and repeating screening throughout the care continuum are necessary for high-quality cancer care.

CONCLUSIONS

Although numerous cancer programs and practices have integrated financial advocacy services, they often lack sufficient training specific to conducting financial discussions. Financial toxicity is a foundational aspect of cancer treatment, and addressing patients' financial barriers is crucial for treatment adherence and health outcomes.



ACCC's **Financial Advocacy Services Guidelines** and **Assessment Tool** help cancer care delivery organizations assess and improve financial advocacy services across the US.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This program was conducted in partnership with:



This program was made possible with support from Eisai, Genentech, Pfizer, and Regeneron.



CONTACT US

Find additional financial advocacy and navigation resources by scanning the quick response (QR) code or visiting acc-cancer.org/financial-advocacy.

For more information, please reach out to Rifeta Kajdic Hodzic at resources@acc-cancer.org.