

Community Oncology Alliance Applauds Introduction of “Timely Access to Cancer Treatment (TACT) Act”

Bipartisan Bill Ensures Patients with Cancer Receive Medication within 72 Hours, Removing Red Tape and Delays

Washington D.C., May 27, 2021 – The Community Oncology Alliance (COA) applauds Representative Terri Sewell (D-AL) for her leadership along with Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) in introducing the [Timely Access to Cancer Treatment \(TACT\) Act of 2021 \(H.R. 3258\)](#). The TACT Act is a patient empowerment bill that guarantees that patients get their prescribed oral cancer medications within 72 hours when middlemen, such as pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), require that patients get their drugs from their corporate mail order pharmacies. Time is of the essence in cancer treatment, and COA supports the passage of this bill and the common-sense approach to empowering patients over middlemen.

The modern health care delivery system is increasingly complex. Rather than allowing patients to get their drugs from their cancer clinics at the site of care, PBMs and insurers often require their approval of a physician’s choice of medication – creating delays that can last weeks, or months, before the patient receives treatment – as well as forcing patients to get their critical cancer drugs in the mail, often further increasing treatment delays and unnecessary patient anxieties. In oncology, any delays are unacceptable and can be life-threatening. The TACT Act necessitates PBMs and other middlemen in our health care system to act swiftly and with the patient’s wellbeing in mind.

“Patients facing cancer must be able to receive their prescribed medications in a timely manner, without unnecessary delays by PBMs. The TACT Act of 2021 helps overcome the tremendous barriers to patient care that oncologists face, including delays from PBMs and insurers,” said Kashyap Patel, MD, president of COA and a practicing medical oncologist at Carolina Blood and Cancer Care Associates in Rock Hill, South Carolina. “COA and its members thank Congresswoman Sewell for her leadership along with Congressman Bilirakis in introducing a bipartisan bill that empowers cancer patients. I hope others in Congress will join them in supporting this important legislation.”

“The TACT Act of 2021 is the definition of good, bipartisan legislation that puts patients first by reducing unnecessary hurdles cancer patients face in getting treated,” said Ted Okon, MBA, executive director of COA. “Thank you to Representatives Sewell and Bilirakis for taking the lead on this important bipartisan legislation. We encourage all members of Congress to put their support behind this bill to make it a reality.”

COA looks forward to working with Congress to advance the TACT Act and other reforms of our nation’s cancer care system to ensure patients with cancer are not harassed by unnecessary treatment delays. The status quo in the nation’s health care system is unacceptable. Reps. Sewell and Bilirakis have taken a major step toward empowering patients get their medications when they are needed.

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About 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 cancer patients 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 at www.CommunityOncology.org. Follow COA on Twitter at www.twitter.com/oncologyCOA or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CommunityOncologyAlliance.