American Cancer Society Statement: American Cancer Society Ready to Play a Lead Role in Providing Patient Navigation Training and Certification Standards

Professional navigation requires a set of skills and competencies to ensure patients receive recommended care that can improve outcomes

WASHINGTON D.C. – September 13, 2023 – Earlier today, President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden issued a Fact Sheet to announce new actions and commitments to end cancer as we know it.

We applaud the inclusion of the American Cancer Society (ACS) new oncology professional navigator curricula and certification program, critical technical training that will support newly proposed reimbursement for navigation services for Medicare enrollees.

The American Cancer Society has long focused on patient navigation as an evidence-based intervention that can significantly reduce barriers and support cancer patients and their families in managing a cancer diagnosis. We are committed to playing a critical role in ensuring navigators get the training and certification needed so this essential support can be more widely accessed as a covered service.

Successful navigation of health care barriers for patients undergoing cancer treatment involves the deployment of skills and care plans unique to other diseases like heart failure and chronic respiratory disease – making care more manageable for patients by providing additional support through professionally-trained individuals. Prioritizing patient navigation is particularly important to achieve the President's Cancer Moonshot goals of cancer health equity, as the greatest impact of professional navigators is often addressing the needs of under-resourced or marginalized communities.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), ACS' advocacy affiliate, continues to promote policies that expand sustainable access to patient navigation to better support cancer patients. As part of this effort, ACS CAN is urging CMS to finalize a proposed policy as part of a recent payment rule that would allow Medicare to implement a reimbursement strategy that will ensure payment for patient navigation services delivered by professionally trained and certified navigators. ACS CAN also joined with patient and provider groups in a second letter to emphasize the critical importance of navigation reimbursement to facilitating this critical service.

ACS will launch the nonclinical cancer navigation curriculum and certification program to train workforce beginning January 2024. The evidence is clear, navigation improves outcomes at the patient, caregiver, and health system level. Prioritizing patient navigation is particularly important to achieve the President's Cancer Moonshot goals of cancer health equity, as the greatest impact of professional navigators is often addressing the needs of under-resourced or marginalized communities

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