

Results of ASCO's Sequestration Impact Survey

Below are the results of a sequestration impact survey conducted by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) April 23 to May 1 as Medicare began processing reimbursement claims under the funding cuts that took effect April 1.*

- 80 percent of survey respondents said that the sequestration cuts have affected their practices:
- Nearly 50 percent reported not being able to continue caring for Medicare patients unless they have supplemental insurance.
- 50 percent of respondents reported sending their Medicare patients elsewhere for chemotherapy, primarily to more expensive hospital outpatient infusion centers.
 - Of those respondents sending Medicare patients elsewhere, the majority of practices reported between 10 percent and 50 percent of their patients were affected by this dislocation. However, some have had to redirect all of their patients.
- 25 percent reported no longer participating in clinical research.
- 14 percent reported having to stop taking Medicare patients altogether at the time of this survey.
- 74 percent of survey respondents reported having difficulty paying for chemotherapy drugs.
- 22 percent reported they have or will need to close satellite clinical or outreach clinics, assuming the sequester cuts remain in place.

More than 500 ASCO members responded to the online survey. Survey results reflect a wide demographic mix of oncology practices with 44 percent in suburban settings, 41 percent in urban settings, and 16 percent in rural settings. Responding oncology practice ranged in size from 1 to 48 full-time medical oncologists. Because sequestration's impact is in its earliest phase, ASCO will re-survey its membership in the coming months to monitor the effect of the funding cuts over time.

**ASCO conducted follow up surveys that resulted in similar responses to the May survey. The one major difference was that more practices reported follow through with clinical staff lay off. The average is 3 clinical staff lay-offs per practice (e.g., NPs and medical assistants). Seventy-six practices reported laying off an average of 2 administrative staff per practice.*