COVID-19 Impacts on Cancer Care

Summary

Avalere research was published online in the Journal of Clinical Oncology Clinical Cancer Informatics, showing a considerable drop in cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment for Medicare beneficiaries as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The study, conducted in collaboration with the Community Oncology Alliance (COA), utilized Inovalon Provider Clearinghouse data, which represents 5%–7% of the Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) population. The goal of the analysis was to examine over 6 million oncology claims to identify changes in the utilization of cancer care services and gain insight into the impact of COVID-19 on access to cancer care, about those services ability to diagnose and treat cancer in a timely manner, and on the treatment journeys for patients.

“The Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer Care: How the Pandemic is Delaying Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment for American Seniors” found reductions in the following areas:

- Patient evaluation and management visits for both new and established patients (Figure 1)
- Breast, colon, prostate, and lung cancer screenings (Figure 2)
- Cancer biopsies and surgeries
- Cancer-related hospitalizations
- Chemotherapy infusions (Figure 3)

Read the COA press release on this research.

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Figure 1. Barriers to Care Caused by COVID-19 Complications Have Resulted in Significant Reductions in Patient Visits
Figure 2. Limitations on Delivery of Care due to COVID-19 Have Resulted in Significant Reductions in Cancer Screenings

Figure 3. Reductions in Infusion Services in July and Later Months May Be Attributable to Delayed and Postponed Screenings