Are Centers and Practices Implementing Changes to Their Reimbursement or Payment Models?
An NCCN Trends Report

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The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is scheduled to go into effect in 2014 with the goal of making health care more accessible. Beginning in October 2013, people in the United States will have the option to enroll for health insurance through state-based health insurance marketplaces (also known as health insurance exchanges). As a result, coverage is expected to expand, with as many as 27 million additional lives covered by 2016. That these changes will affect patients is clear; less clear is how the changes will affect current reimbursement and payment models within oncology centers and practices.

To gain a better understanding of how reimbursement models may change within centers or practices, NCCN conducted an NCCN Trends survey in 2012. Respondents included oncology physicians, nurses, surgeons, pharmacists, and other oncology stakeholders from the United States and abroad. The survey focused on the initiation of new payment and reimbursement models with insurers or accountable care organizations (ACOs).

NCCN first asked whether respondents’ centers or practices had initiated any new payment or reimbursement models with insurers or ACOs. As shown in Figure 1, 15% of respondents answered “Yes,” with close to half of the respondents (48%) answering “No.” Thirty-eight percent of the respondents answered “Not applicable” (N/A).

Respondents who answered “No” to the initiation of new payment or reimbursement models were asked about the likelihood of their centers or practices incorporating new payment or reimbursement models with insurers or ACOs by the end of 2013. As shown in Figure 2, 24% of the respondents said they were “Likely” to “Extremely likely” to incorporate new payment or reimbursement models. Thirty-five percent answered “Neutral,” with 41% answering “Unlikely” to “Extremely unlikely.”

In summary, for respondents for whom the initiation of new payment or reimbursement models apply (those not answering “N/A”), approximately 24% have started new models with insurers or ACOs. In addition, more practices and centers are...
planning to initiate changes in 2013, which can be expected with the implementation of the ACA in 2014. The transition to the changes resulting from health care reform will ultimately depend on how patients and oncology stakeholders adapt.

Figure 2  Likelihood of new payment/reimbursement models with insurers or accountable care organizations. NCCN asked respondents the likelihood of their center or practice incorporating new payment/reimbursement models with insurers or accountable care organizations by the end of 2013 (n=217).