



In conversation with Dr Blase Polite, Member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology Board of Directors

CHANGING PAYMENT SYSTEMS TO MEET THE 'TRIPLE AIM' OF BETTER HEALTH, BETTER CARE, LOWER COSTS

Europe's cost pressures on cancer care are not suffered in isolation. If anything, they may be reaching a tipping point rather sooner in the US, explained Dr Blase Polite of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Board of Directors, during a special 'In conversation with...' segment of the ECCO 2019 European Cancer Summit.

"Health insurance costs are continually increasing and this situation now constitutes a crisis and, as we all know, cancer is constantly in the spotlight when it comes to healthcare," he commented.

In less than 15 years, health insurance premiums in the US have risen by more than three times the rate

KEY MESSAGE

Put simply, quality in oncology care is: Right care, right person, right time, good outcome ...
... and sharing data and practice experiences as widely as possible.

of the average workers' salaries. In this light, Dr Polite joked that a definition of 'chutzpah' could be for an American oncologist to travel to Europe to lecture on the costs of cancer care. But solutions emerge from dialogue, he said, and from this perspective, answers to this common problem will emerge from open debate and discussion on the best ways forward, sparking new opportunities for shared learning and new approaches.

Reflecting on other aspects of the Summit programme that he attended, Dr Polite sensed a shared desire in Europe and the US to create cancer care systems that effectively direct resources to areas where their use delivers the highest value. But achieving this requires policy action that enables systems to better identify and avoid low-value treatments, and to develop mechanisms that reduce expensive but potentially avoidable costs. This includes, for example, avoiding presentation of cases at the emergency room and managing levels of inpatient hospitalisation and readmission.

Summarising, he commented, “It’s all about getting more for doing more. That is where we all have to go.”

Injecting quality management into clinical oncology care and practice is about more than guidelines, frameworks and quality audits. Dr Blase Polite shared the US experience on how new thinking on quality cancer care encourages continuous learning and improvement.

Dr Polite also spoke to the approaches developed in the US to help ensure quality of cancer care, giving the example of the ASCO Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI®). Looking at ECCO’s activity with OEI to encourage a more common approach to cancer care quality in Europe, Dr Polite highlighted the benefits that the global cancer care community can reap from future international cooperation in this area. “No matter where you live, in the US, Europe or elsewhere, a cancer patient should have the right to the same high-quality standard of care.”

