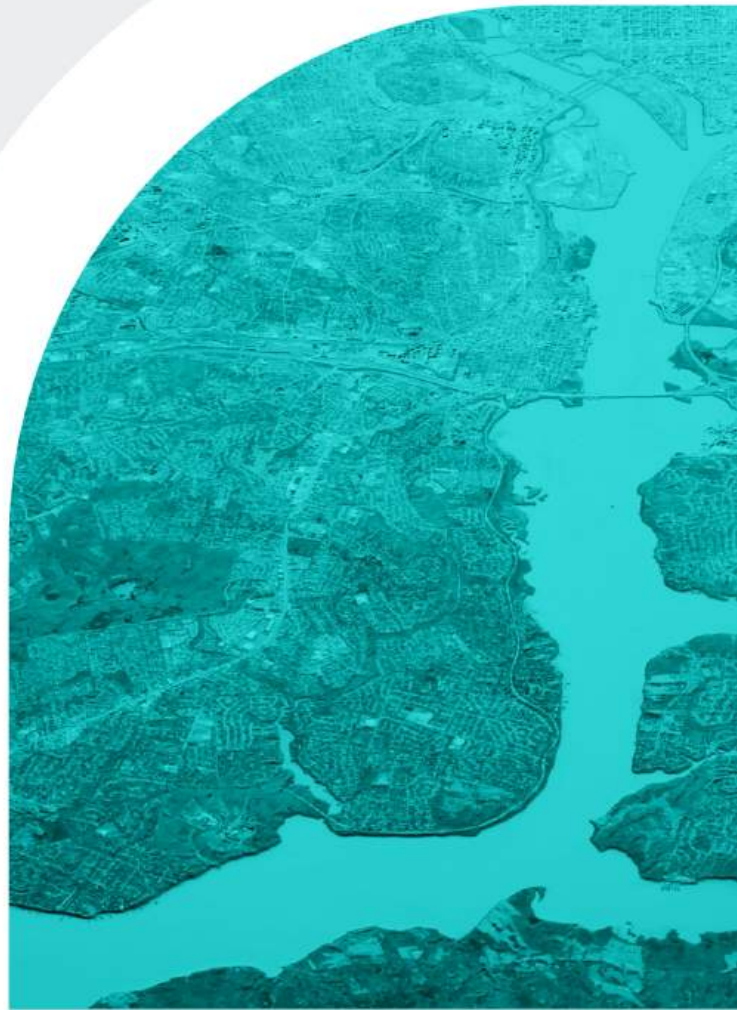




2024 Annual Report on Government Relations Activities

Prepared for the
Society of Gynecologic Oncology



2024 in Review

Overview of Activities on SGO Principal Priorities

- *Appropriations* – CRD advanced SGO’s appropriations priorities by advocating for robust funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Additionally, CRD advocated for the creation of a line item for endometrial cancer in the Department of Defense’s Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) funded at \$10 million and \$45 million for the DoD Ovarian Cancer Research Program (OCRCP). CRD also drafted and advocated for SGO’s report language on the prioritization of the National Coverage Determination (NCD) for Screening for Cervical Cancer, and the implementation of a quality management maturity (QMM) program at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to prevent drug shortages in FY 2025.

While Congress has not yet finalized FY 2025 appropriations, CRD was pleased to see that the Senate Labor-HHS appropriations bill included a 4 percent increase in funding for the NIH compared to the House bill that included a funding cut and massive restructuring. Additionally, SGO’s report language on CMS’ NCD for Screening for Cervical Cancer and FDA’s QMM program were both included in the House FY 2025 Labor-HHS bill. Forty-five members of Congress signed onto a Dear Colleague letter in support of the NCD report language. While SGO’s request for an endometrial cancer line-item was not included in the final House and Senate defense appropriations bills, the funds provided by the House and Senate for the Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program continue to include endometrial cancer among other research topics.

CRD’s appropriations advocacy activities on behalf of SGO included organizing meetings with congressional appropriators, facilitating SGO member engagement through action alerts, and organizing SGO’s virtual Endometrial Cancer Congressional Briefing. CRD also supported SGO’s September Capitol Hill Day and maintained pressure on Congress to finalize FY 2025 appropriations through targeted letters and action alerts. In 2025, CRD will continue to urge Congress to finalize FY 2025 spending and ensure that our requests are included in any final bill.

- *Drug Shortages* – CRD and SGO continued to advocate for policies to prevent future shortages and ensure that patients and practitioners will not have to question whether standard of care cancer therapies will be available. CRD escorted SGO’s President to Capitol Hill for meetings with staff on the Committees of jurisdiction and drugs shortages was one of SGO’s main asks during its virtual Capitol Hill Day in September. Additionally, CRD covered congressional hearings, tracked and reviewed legislation, and drafted comment letters in response to the Senate Finance Committee’s white paper and legislative discussion draft establishing a program to mitigate and prevent drug shortages. Separate from the chemotherapy drug shortages, SGO also responded to the shortages of IV fluids caused by Hurricane Helene. This will continue to be an area of ongoing advocacy.
- *Physician Payment* – CRD continued to support SGO in advocating for policies aimed at ensuring sustainable Medicare reimbursement and preventing reductions in Medicare physician payments. Throughout the year, CRD closely monitored developments and opportunities for engagement on Capitol Hill, assisting SGO in submitting formal comments and mobilizing their members to contact members of Congress. Although Congress did not prevent or offset the Medicare physician payment cut by the end of 2024, CRD will continue to support SGO’s advocacy to press lawmakers to address this issue in 2025. Looking ahead, CRD and SGO will advocate for

comprehensive, long-term solutions to establish a stable and sustainable Medicare physician payment system.

- *Women's Health Research* – Off Capitol Hill, the White House advanced its Initiative on Women's Health Research and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's (NASEM) Assessment of NIH Research on Women's Health culminated in the release of a report in December 2024. SGO had former President Angeles Alvarez Secord, MD, MHSc serve on the NASEM panel. Throughout the year, SGO provided written comments to both the White House and NASEM and kept our Hill contacts abreast of the latest developments and potential legislative opportunities to support research in gynecologic cancers and women's health more broadly. With a new administration and Congress in place this year, SGO will continue to advocate for policies to build upon the important work of that was completed in 2024.

Correspondence and Resources

- *Action Alerts*: To mobilize SGO members to engage with their members of Congress on key legislative priorities, CRD developed five customizable, prewritten alerts. These alerts allow SGO members to tailor their messages and advocate for the society's priorities.
 - Three FY 2025 appropriations-focused action alerts.
 - One Medicare physician payment-related action alert.
 - One action alert with SGO's Capitol Hill Day requests.
- *Letters to Capitol Hill*: SGO sent 10 written communications to members of Congress to share policy priorities and recommendations on issues of importance to members.
 - Letter to Senate Finance Committee majority and minority staff in response to their efforts to develop a Medicare drug shortage prevention and mitigation program.
 - Letter to Congressional leadership urging them to mitigate the 3.37% cut to Medicare physician reimbursement that went into effect on January 1, 2024.
 - Statement for the Record in response to the Senate Finance Committee's April Hearing on "Bolstering Chronic Care through Medicare Physician Payment."
 - Response to the Senate Finance Committee's discussion draft establishing a program to mitigate and prevent drug shortages.
 - Response to the Senate Finance Committee's white paper titled, "Bolstering Chronic Care through Physician Payment: Current Challenges and Policy Options in Medicare Part B."
 - Letter to Congressional leadership urging them to pass legislation to extend Medicare telehealth flexibilities for two years.
 - Response to House Energy and Commerce Republicans' proposed framework for reforming the NIH.
 - Comments on the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees' payment reform outline.
 - Letter to Congressional leadership urging them to pass legislation to eliminate the 2.83% cut to physician payment and extend telehealth services before the end of 2024.
 - Letter to Congressional leadership urging them to finalize FY 2025 spending before the end of 2024 and provide full and robust funding for gynecologic cancer research and care.
- *Testimony*: SGO provided two written statements to the House and Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittees to advocate for our FY 2025 funding priorities related to gynecologic oncology.
- *Letters to Agencies*: To advocate for change or encourage the creation of healthcare policy that supports the SGO's policy goals, while also supporting members and the patients they serve,

CRD prepared and submitted comment letters to federal agencies. In 2024, CRD produced five letters.

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
 - Drafted and submitted comments on a Medicare Advantage request for information.
 - Drafted and submitted comments on the FY 2025 Medicare Inpatient Prospective Payment System proposed rule and the CY 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule.
 - Drafted a stakeholder sign-on letter on the NCD for cervical cancer screening.
- Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC)
 - Prepared comments for submission on the HTI-2 proposed rule.
- *Letters to the Administration*
 - Drafted and sent letter to President Joe Biden on the shortages of intravenous (IV) and peritoneal dialysis solutions resulting from a supply chain disruption caused by Hurricane Helene.
- *October Advocacy with Congressional Ambassadors*
 - Created an Advocacy Toolkit with information on how members can (1) identify their members of Congress, and (2) engage with members of Congress via in-person/virtual meetings, town halls, phone calls, and emails.
 - Created two 1-Pagers on physician payment and funding for gynecologic cancer research.
 - Prepared an audio-recorded training session for members.
- *SGO Issues: As a part of CRD's work with SGO, we draft articles for inclusion in SGO Issues. We use this publication to disseminate information on a wide range of topics including alerting members about the annual release of Medicare payment rules, providing information on coding changes affecting members, providing updates on policy changes within the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, and other payment rules, updating members on drug shortages, and many other topics. CRD produced 14 articles for SGO Issues. The following is a list of topics covered by CRD throughout 2024.*
 - G2211 coding guidance.
 - Final updates on FY 2024 appropriations spending.
 - Updates on the Medicare physician pay fix.
 - Information on the release of an FAQ for Medicare Advantage plans
 - Updates on ARPA-H funding for women's health.
 - Information on the release of the Prior Authorization final rule.
 - Update on the AMA national survey of physician practice expenses.
 - Congressional action needed to mitigate Medicare physician fee schedule conversion factor cut.
 - Update on the Improving Seniors Access to Timely Care Act.
 - Identifying knowledge and research gaps in women's health.
 - Updates on the FY 2025 appropriations process.
 - SGO's comments on NIH reform.
 - Updates on the release of the 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposed and final rules.
 - Global surgical services Medicare billing guide.
- *Other Correspondence and Resources: CRD produced several types of correspondence and resources throughout the year to assist and provide guidance to SGO members and staff on topics deemed relevant to supporting the priorities of the SGO.*
 - Appropriations

- Developed and kept SGO members updated with an FY 2025 appropriations tracker highlighting funding levels and report language of interest to members.
- Worked with Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ) to lead Dear Colleague letter in the House. Secured 45 signatures.
- Submitted more than 70 appropriations request forms in support of the Society's FY 2025 requests.
- Proposed and Final Regulations
 - Drafted a summary and comment comparison chart for the CMS Prior Authorization final rule.
 - Drafted a summary of the CMS Medicare Advantage request for information to send to Coding and PRQC subcommittees requesting feedback for comment letter content.
 - Reviewed, analyzed, and drafted summary of the 2025 MPFS proposed and final rules.
 - Created MPFS payment rate charts, using the most up-to-date conversion factor, for procedures and services provided by gynecologic oncologists.
 - Drafted a comment comparison chart comparing SGO submitted comments and finalized policy of the 2025 MPFS final rule.
 - Sent a targeted alert to the Coding Subcommittee regarding the proposed changes to the global surgical package policy as outlined in the 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule.
 - Reviewed, analyzed, and prepared a summary of the FY 2025 Medicare Inpatient Prospective Payment System proposed rule.
- Coding Materials
 - Assisted with drafting a Coding Corner on the use of HCPCS code G2211.
 - Assisted with drafting of a Coding Corner on the use of new pelvic exam CPT code +99459.
 - Reviewed, commented, and provided guidance on the slide deck for the Coding Course held at the annual meeting.
 - Reviewed and provided insight on the business plan for the creation of an SGO coding manual.
 - Prepared an annual report on SGO coding and reimbursement activities for the October CHEC meeting.
- Other
 - Prepared a summary of the financial assistance that CMS provided to health care entities affected by the February 2024 Change Healthcare cyberattack.
 - Prepared a summary of the June 2024 MedPAC Report to Congress.
 - Summarized the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee hearing on "Improving Value-Based Care for Patients and Providers."
 - Summarized the Senate Finance Committee's hearing on "Bolstering Chronic Care through Medicare Physician Payment."
 - Drafted and sent email to Dr. Doug Lowy, NCI Deputy Director, as a follow-up from our November 2023 meeting

Legislation

- Endorsed
 - Mapping America's Pharmaceutical Supply (MAPS) Act ([H.R.6992/S.2364](#))
 - This legislation outlines the process for mapping pharmaceutical supply chains from inception to distribution, requiring HHS to establish a database of selected drugs/APIs to be monitored, and specifically defining the criteria for a drug/API. Recommended that SGO endorse this legislation given how it would help federal agencies identify supply chain vulnerabilities that cause drug shortages.

- Status: H.R.6992 and S.2364 were both introduced and referred to committee in the 118th Congress.
- Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act ([H.R.4363/S.2213](#))
 - This legislation establishes programs and requirements to support the provision of services for cancer survivors, including health care, employment, and supportive services. Recommended that SGO endorse this legislation given that it would improve the future of cancer survivorship care, quality of life of cancer survivors, and aligned with many of SGO's strategic goals.
 - Status: H.R.4363 and S.2213 were both introduced and referred to committee in the 118th Congress.
- Telehealth Modernization Act ([H.R.7623/S.3967](#))
 - This legislation modifies the requirements for the coverage of Medicare telehealth services. Recommended that SGO endorse this legislation as it aligns with SGO's policy priority to extend telehealth flexibilities.
 - Status: H.R.7623 and S.3967 were both introduced and referred to committee in the 118th Congress. Ultimately, in the American Relief Act of 2025, Medicare telehealth waivers were extended through March 31, 2025.
- Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Reauthorization Act ([H.R.7153/ S.3679](#))
 - This legislation is a reauthorization of the only federal law dedicated to preventing suicide and reducing occupational burnout, mental health conditions, and stress for health care professionals. Recommended that SGO endorse this legislation as it aligns with SGO's policy priorities on physician wellness.
 - Status: H.R.7153 and S.3679 were both introduced and referred to committee in the 118th Congress.
- Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act ([H.R.8702/S.4518](#))
 - This legislation aims to streamline the prior authorization process for items and services under the Medicare Advantage (MA) program, allowing health care providers to prioritize their patients' access to care. SGO has been supportive of this legislation in the past, and it was recommended that they endorse.
 - Status: H.R.8702 and S.4518 were both introduced and referred to committee in the 118th Congress.
- Medicare Patient Access and Practice Stabilization Act of 2024 ([H.R.10073](#))
 - This legislation would eliminate the scheduled 2.8% Medicare physician fee schedule cut and provide an inflationary update in calendar year 2025. Recommended that SGO endorse this legislation as it aligns with SGO's policy priority to avert any cuts in Medicare physician reimbursement.
 - Status: H.R.10073 was introduced and referred to committee in the 118th Congress.
- Reviewed
 - Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act ([H.R.1570/S.668](#))
 - From the 116th Congress, reviewed as part of SGO's cervical cancer advocacy to understand how this bill could serve as a blueprint for possible legislation on modifying the cost-sharing requirements for colposcopies.
 - Status: Passed in the FY 2021 Omnibus package.
 - Uterine Cancer Study Act of 2024 ([H.R.9782](#))
 - This legislation would require HHS, FDA, and NIH to coordinate and conduct a study on the relationship between hair straighteners and uterine cancers. CRD advised that directing NIH to study certain topics runs contrary to the agency's peer-review process. For these reasons, HPSE and Leg Affairs Leadership agreed not to endorse the bill.
 - Status: H.R.9782 was introduced and referred to committee in the 118th Congress.

- Diane Powis Ovarian Cancer Testing Act ([H.R.9090](#))
 - From the 117th Congress, this legislation was expected to be reintroduced in the 118th Congress. CRD reviewed and met with bill sponsor Madeleine Dean's (D-PA) staff regarding the proposal. Ultimately, CRD outlined out concerns with the legislation to the Leg Affairs co-chairs and recommended that SGO not endorse it if reintroduced.
 - Status: Legislation was not reintroduced in the 118th Congress.
- American Medical Association's Draft Legislation to Reform the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS)
 - Status: Legislation was not introduced in the 118th Congress.
- Jeanette Acosta Invest in Women's Health Act of 2024 ([H.R.10287/S.5428](#))
 - This legislation aims to increase the availability of preventive cancer screenings by creating a new grant and pilot programs to expand access to preventive services and screenings for breast and gynecological cancers.
 - Status: Introduced in the 118th Congress.

Meetings and Events

- Coalitions
 - Surgical Coalition
 - Led by the American College of Surgeons (ACS).
 - Meetings scheduled every Monday, approximately 40 per year (some are canceled by ACS staff).
 - CRD staff attended 32 meetings in 2024.
 - Committee on Health Economics and Coding (CHEC)
 - Led by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG)
 - CRD staff attended the February, May, and October virtual meetings in 2024.
 - One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC)
 - Led by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN).
 - Meetings scheduled on the third Monday of every month.
 - CRD staff attended 12 meetings in 2024.
 - Drug Shortages Stakeholder Coalition
 - CRD staff attended eight meetings in 2024.
- Grassroots
 - Four virtual meetings with the sponsors of the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act in January
 - Appropriations Meetings
 - Scheduled and attended 16 meetings with appropriators and SGO members from February 28- March 1.
 - Held approximately 12 CRD staff-level meetings with appropriators throughout the year.
 - Four in-person meetings with Dr. Fader on Drug Shortages on February 29
 - Met with Representative Madeleine Dean's (D-PA) staff to discuss the reintroduction of the Diane Powis Ovarian Cancer Testing Act.
 - SGO Annual Capitol Hill Day
 - Prepared leave behind materials and talking points
 - Prepared for and conducted training session on September 16
 - Attended Hill meetings with SGO members on September 18
 - October Advocacy with Congressional Ambassadors (see prepared materials above).
- Internal
 - Monthly check-ins with SGO staff – Two times per month, 24 per year.

- Subcommittee meetings – In 2024, PRQC met three times, Coding Subcommittee four times, and the Legislative Committee met three times.
 - Monthly meetings with subcommittee chairs – One per month for the Legislative Affairs and Coding Subcommittees and check-ins as necessary for the PRQC Subcommittee.
 - Met with Coding Subcommittee chairs to discuss a member educational plan for the use of HCPCS code G2211.
 - Virtual HPSE meeting at the annual SGO annual meeting.
 - Virtual policy update for the Board in July.
 - Held three Zoom meetings with SGO members to discuss projects related to cervical cancer.
- Other Meetings and Events
 - Endometrial Cancer Virtual Congressional Briefing on June 6
 - Organized preparatory meetings.
 - Prepared briefing run of show and compiled panel presentations.
 - Secured opening statement from Rep. Coleman
 - Circulated briefing invites to the Hill. Seven Hill staffers in attendance, 20 registered.
 - Recording was distributed across various channels and has received over 120 views.