

Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Access to Care Position Statement

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation advocates on behalf of millions of Americans who are affected by Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, which are collectively known as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The Foundation also provides access to unparalleled resources for physicians, advanced practice professionals, scientists, and other healthcare professionals who care for patients with IBD.

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation supports the following access to care policy statement:

All IBD patients have a fundamental right to access healthcare, which includes access to preventative healthcare, healthcare professionals, and appropriate and effective treatments inclusive of diagnostics, disease monitoring, and prognostics, medications, and surgical procedures. We also support patients in their choice to access healthcare in person or via telehealth. The decision on the most appropriate therapy for their illness should be made by a patient and their healthcare professional, following medical evidence. All FDA-approved therapies should be accessible to patients following medical guidance and real-world practice.

Additionally, the Foundation vehemently opposes any policy that would repeal the patient protections outlined in the Affordable Care Act, or any policy that intentionally discriminates based on a patient's chronic illness or individual characteristics.

To advance efforts to expand access to care and to safeguard the shared decision-making process between patients and professionals, the Foundation specifically supports the following principles:

Access to Care

Affordable and accessible healthcare enables IBD patients to receive the care they need when they need it. Working alongside expert medical advisors, we are committed to providing our patients with accurate information and ensuring they have access to the best possible care they need. We oppose barriers that delay urgent decision-making on medication or surgical treatments, as such delays can result in poor outcomes for patients. Specifically, the Foundation:

- Supports IBD patients, adult and pediatric, to have the right to access healthcare. This includes accessing:
 - Healthcare professionals
 - Medications
 - Medical nutrition therapy
 - Diagnostics and prognostics
 - Surgical treatments
- Supports access to telehealth services for adult and pediatric patients.
- Supports federal and state policies that promote comprehensive, affordable, and accessible healthcare
- Supports accessibility of all FDA-approved therapies, following medical guidance and real-world practice. FDA-approved interventions include, but are not limited to, diagnostics, disease monitoring, prognostics, surgical devices, etc.
- Opposes access to IBD care that is limited by race, ethnicity, gender, or any social determinants of health
- Opposes policies that intentionally discriminate based on a patient's IBD status or individual characteristics
- Opposes access to care that is unduly limited by:
 - Insurance utilization management or other barriers
 - Limitations set by state or federal governments that do not align with current medical guidance and real-world practice
 - Where treatment may be received

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is actively working to address these issues of access to care by striving to pass step therapy reform legislation on the state and federal level, conducting research to better understand how IBD affects underserved communities, and studying the factors that contribute to the high cost of care for patients to make policy recommendations in the future.

We oppose barriers that delay urgent decision-making on medication or surgical treatments, as such delays can result in bad outcomes for patients

Shared Decision-Making in Patient Care

Shared decision-making is essential to fostering patient-centered healthcare. Professionals and patients must work together to agree on a healthcare plan that balances a patient's medical history, potential treatment risks, expected outcomes, and takes into consideration the patient's preferences and values. Patients should be kept informed of their options and ultimately be able to choose the most appropriate option for medical care, treatment, and tests with their physician. To safeguard this collaborative process and the patient-professional relationship, the Foundation:

- Supports that decision-making on the most appropriate therapy, following medical evidence, should be made by the patient and their healthcare professional
- Supports the continued protection of patient health information, which should be shared only upon receiving direct consent from the patient

Questions

If you have questions about IBD or access to care, our Irwin M. and Suzanne R. Rosenthal IBD Resource Center (IBD Help Center) can assist. Our team of specialists can guide patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals on finding specific resources, getting referrals to other organizations, and understanding health insurance coverage.

The IBD Help Center's helpline is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET.

- Call us: 1-888-MY-GUT-PAIN (888-694-8872, extension 8)
- Email us: info@crohnscolitisfoundation.org

The IBD Help Center will respond to all inquiries within 72 hours, excluding weekends.