

ANCO FAX News

Association of Northern California Oncologists
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INTRODUCTION

The *ANCO FAX News* focuses on ANCO's core activities—advocacy, clinical and professional education, membership benefits, and *Association* news. While membership mailings, FAX broadcasts, and ListServ postings continue, the *ANCO FAX News* summarizes this information in a regular forum of important news to members. Contact the ANCO office for additional information regarding any item published in the *ANCO FAX News* or to contribute items.

The *ANCO FAX News* is sent to member practices (via FAX) and Corporate Member contacts (via e-mail). The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on August 17th. Comments on and contributions to the *ANCO FAX News* are always welcome and encouraged at ANCO, P.O. Box 151109, San Rafael, CA 94915-1109; Voice: (415) 472-3960; FAX: (415) 472-3961; ExecDir@anco-online.org.

ADVOCACY

[*Editor's Note:* ANCO meets regularly with national, regional, and statewide organizations to discuss issues of importance to hematology/oncology practices and people living with cancer. We continually seek input from members on agenda items for these meetings. Send your issues to the ANCO office.]

ACCC, ASCO, ASH, and National Legislative & Regulatory Issues

[*Editor's Note:* ANCO is a member of the *Association of Community Cancer Centers* (ACCC) and a state/regional affiliate of the *American Society of Clinical Oncology* (ASCO).

ANCO and the *American Society of Hematology* (ASH) share information with members. We regularly participate with these organizations on matters of national importance to cancer care.]

CMS announced its *National Coverage Determination* (NCD) for erythropoiesis stimulating agents (ESAs) for non-renal applications on July 30th. In summary, the NCD provides coverage for ESAs with restrictions for the treatment of anemia secondary to myelosuppressive anticancer chemotherapy in certain cancer conditions, such as solid tumors,

**There is information in the
ANCO FAX News
for every member of your practice
or organization.
Pass it along!**

- Physician Members
- Nurses & Office Managers
- Office Staff
- Colleagues & Representatives

The *Association of Northern California Oncologists* (ANCO) is an association of hematologists/oncologists dedicated to promoting high professional standards of cancer care by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, data, and knowledge. The material contained in the *ANCO FAX News* is intended as general information for ANCO members. Because diagnostic, treatment, contracting, coding, and billing decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, any such information contained in the *ANCO FAX News* may not apply in any given situation. Members are encouraged to contact their own consultants or advisors to obtain specific advice on matters relating to contracting, coding, and billing. The information contained in the *ANCO FAX News* should not be used as a substitute for such advice.

multiple myeloma, lymphoma, and lymphocytic leukemia. The ESA NCD is effective July 30th. Details are available at www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdecisionmemo.asp?id=203. CMS's *Frequently Asked Questions* (FAQs) and answers on the ESA NCD are available at www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/ncpc_view_document.asp?id=12.

According to ASCO, the key provisions in the ESA NCD are as follows:

1. CMS has not implemented any restrictions on the use of ESAs in patients with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS).
2. CMS has determined that the use of ESAs is *not* reasonable and necessary for Medicare beneficiaries with the following conditions:
 - Any anemia in cancer or cancer treatment patients due to folate deficiency, B-12 deficiency, iron deficiency, hemolysis, bleeding, or bone marrow fibrosis;
 - The anemia associated with the treatment of acute and chronic myelogenous leukemias (AML, CML), or erythroid cancers;
 - The anemia of cancer not related to cancer treatment;
 - Any anemia associated only with radiotherapy;
 - Prophylactic use to prevent chemotherapy-induced anemia;
 - Prophylactic use to reduce tumor hypoxia;
 - Patients with erythropoietin-type resistance due to neutralizing antibodies; and
 - Anemia due to cancer treatment if patients have uncontrolled hypertension
3. CMS has determined that ESA treatment for the anemia secondary to myelosuppressive anticancer chemotherapy in solid tumors, multiple myeloma, lymphoma, and lymphocytic leukemia is only reasonable and necessary under the following conditions:
 - The hemoglobin level immediately prior to initiation or maintenance of ESA

treatment is <10g/dL (or the hematocrit is <30%).

- The starting dose for ESA treatment is the recommended FDA label starting dose, no more than 150U/kg/three times weekly for epoetin and 2.25mcg/kg/weekly for darbepoetin alpha. Equivalent doses may be given over other approved time periods.
 - Maintenance of ESA therapy is the starting dose if the hemoglobin level remains <10g/dL (or hematocrit is <30%) 4 weeks after initiation of therapy and the rise in hemoglobin is >1g/dL (hematocrit >3%).
 - For patients whose hemoglobin rises <1g/dl (hematocrit rise <3%) compared to pretreatment baseline over 4 weeks of treatment and whose hemoglobin level remains <10g/dL after the 4 weeks of treatment (or the hematocrit is <30%), the recommended FDA label starting dose may be increased once by 25%. Continued use of the drug is not reasonable and necessary if the hemoglobin rises <1g/dl (hematocrit rise <3%) compared to pretreatment baseline by 8 weeks of treatment.
 - Continued administration of the drug is not reasonable and necessary if there is a rapid rise in hemoglobin >1g/dl (hematocrit >3%) over 2 weeks of treatment unless the hemoglobin remains below or subsequently falls to <10g/dL (or the hematocrit is <30%). Continuation and reinstitution of ESA therapy must include a dose reduction of 25% from the previously administered dose.
 - ESA treatment duration for each course of chemotherapy includes the 8 weeks following the final dose of myelosuppressive chemotherapy in a chemotherapy regimen.
4. CMS has confirmed that local Medicare contractors may continue to make reasonable and necessary determinations on all uses of ESAs that are not determined by NCD.

In a letter to CMS, ASCO comments on several provisions of the ESA NCD, specifically:

- The restriction of coverage of ESAs whenever a patient's hemoglobin goes above 10, which is inconsistent with both the FDA-approved label and national guidelines.
- Allowing for a one-time dose escalation of 25% for hypo- or non-responders, which is inconsistent with FDA-approved label and national guidelines.
- The requirement to discontinue ESA treatment (depending on the hemoglobin level) if, after any 2 week period of time, hemoglobin rises by more than 1g/dL, which could result in patients needing to have weekly blood draws in order to assess the rate of hemoglobin rise over any given two week period.

ASCO has also contacted CMS to clarify the NCD's implementation date. As of August 1st, ANCO has not learned of any changes to the NHIC/Medicare ESA coverage policy.

Three pieces of cancer-related legislation are being considered by Congress. HR3011 (*Revision of Payment Methodology for Drugs and Biologicals*) would refine the Medicare drug reimbursement system to ensure that critical chemotherapy drugs remain available to cancer patients by granting CMS the authority to increase payment amounts for oncology drugs when the reimbursement level equal to 106% of the *Average Sales Price* (ASP) does not cover the generally available price of the drugs. It would also exclude prompt-pay discounts offered to wholesalers and distributors in the calculation of ASP. **HR1293/S1338 (*Access to Medicare Imaging Act of 2007*)** seeks a two-year moratorium on the substantial Medicare reductions to in-office imaging included in the *Deficit Reduction Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 2005* (DRA) by delaying the DRA imaging cuts for two years while the *Government Accountability Office* (GAO) conducts a study on the effects of the cuts on Medicare beneficiaries. And, **HR1078 (*Comprehensive Cancer Care Improvement Act of 2007*)** would establish a new Medicare service for comprehensive cancer planning through the continuum of care. Please contact your

Representatives and Senators and urge them to support this legislation.

CMS's Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) establishes a financial incentive for eligible professionals to participate in a voluntary quality-reporting program. Eligible professionals who successfully report a designated set of quality measures on claims for dates of service from July 1st to December 31st, 2007, may earn a lump sum bonus payment in early 2008, subject to a cap, of 1.5% of total allowed charges for covered Medicare physician fee schedule services. You do not need to enroll to participate in the program. You must report the appropriate quality measure data on claims using G-codes and/or CPT codes. For complete information on PQRI, including a User Guide, Tool Kit for successful reporting, beneficiary letters, FAQs, and presentation materials from recent national provider calls, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI. **CMS recently learned that some clearinghouses are stripping NPIs before submitting claims to Medicare.** While this will not affect your ability to get paid, it will adversely affect your ability to participate in the PQRI. If you use a clearinghouse, then you should check with your clearinghouse to find out if it is stripping NPIs. If your clearinghouse is stripping NPIs, you may want to consider other billing options.

CMA, MOASC, and State Legislative & Regulatory Issues

[Editor's Note: ANCO and the Medical Oncology Association of Southern California (MOASC) are members of the California Medical Association's (CMA) House of Delegates and Council on Legislation. ANCO and MOASC coordinate advocacy activities in California.]

CMA has published a *Blue Cross of California Survival Kit* to help you assess the impact fee schedule changes will have on your practice based on your most commonly billed CPT codes. *Blue Cross* recently notified physicians of changes to its *Prudent Buyer* fee schedule. According to a notice mailed to physicians, payment levels for many codes have been modified, some increased and some decreased. Physicians are urged to calculate the impact of these changes on their practices before the fee schedule takes effect August 6th. You should also be aware that you have the right to terminate an agreement if any "material

change” to the contract terms is not beneficial to your practice. The CMA tool kit answers frequently asked questions and discusses the options for physicians who determine that the new contract terms would negatively impact their practices.

CMS recently proposed changes to its Geographic Adjustment Factors (GAFs) that would result in many California counties absorbing significant payment reductions over the next two years. These cuts would be in addition to the 9.9% cuts mandated by the broken *Sustainable Growth Rate* formula. CMA is particularly concerned that physicians in the northern Bay Area will see GAF reductions of 4-9%. CMA is sponsoring HR2428 that would require CMS to move any county whose county GAF exceeds its locality GAF by 5% to its own locality and be reimbursed at the geographically appropriate rate, would require CMS to update the payment localities every three years using the 5% threshold, and would also protect the physicians in counties remaining in original payment localities by establishing a geographic payment floor at current levels.

NHIC/Medicare, DHS/MediCal, & Private Payors

[Editor's Note: ANCO communicates regularly with National Heritage Insurance Company (NHIC) that administers Medicare in California and the Department of Health Services (DHS) that administers MediCal in California.]

NHIC/Medicare has published (prior to the CMS NCD) updated billing guidelines for ESAs (visit www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/articles/esaguidelines_0707.pdf) and off-label indications (visit www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/articles/offlabelmed_0707.pdf). These updated billing guidelines do not incorporate the recently approved CMS ESA NCD.

Changes in the enrollment process over the years have caused some differences between the NPI and Medicare identification number assignment process. This may require some providers to complete an 855I enrollment form in order for their NPI and Medicare numbers to match. Providers particularly affected by the changes include solo incorporated practitioners (Professional Corporations, LLC, Professional

Associations, Corporations) and group practices. For complete information, visit www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/articles/npinotice_0707.pdf. If you need assistance in determining if you need to complete the enrollment form, you may call NHIC/Medicare Customer Service at (877) 527-6613.

DHS/MediCal implemented the use of the CMS-1500 and UB-04 claim forms on June 25th. Providers who previously submitted claims on the HCFA 1500 or the UB-92 claim form **must bill on the new CMS-1500 or the new UB-04 claim form immediately.** Providers not using the new CMS-1500 or the new UB-04 claim form should be in the process of transitioning. Failure to use the new forms for claims submitted after June 25th may result in rejection of the provider's claim. Also, DHS/MediCal will not accept CMS-1500 claim forms with bar codes. Some providers' systems are automatically printing bar codes on the form, which interferes with the claim adjudication process. Providers who have CMS-1500 claim forms with bar codes should contact their software vendor to have this function removed. For additional information visit the "What's New" section at files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/whatsnew_8495_1.asp.

ANCO has communicated directly with Blue Shield of California with regard to its revised ESA coverage policies. In summary, ANCO argued that:

1. the policies were developed without the input of either medical oncologists or hematologists. Substantive errors in the policies would have been avoided by such consultation.
2. the policies were promulgated without any advance notice that would have allowed comment or updated practices and procedures.
3. the policies, based on CMS's proposed ESA coverage policy, were premature, not evidence-based, and economically rather than clinically motivated. In this context, ANCO objected to BS's preference for one ESA product over another.

ANCO accompanied its comments with a letter from ASCO, the ANCO, ASCO, and

ASH comments to CMS, and a recommendation that BS adopt NHIC/Medicare's current ESA coverage policy.

EDUCATION

[*Editor's Note:* ANCO organizes clinical and professional education meetings throughout the year and throughout Northern California.]

Oncology Congress

Oncology Congress takes place on September 6-9th at the *Hilton San Francisco* and is intended to bridge the current gaps in the dissemination of treatment information to practicing oncologists by presenting comprehensive and practical information focused on patient care. Developed by a diverse board of advisors (including ANCO members Sandra Horning, M.D., and Alan Venook, M.D.), *Oncology Congress* focuses on current research findings and their impact on clinical practice, as well as strategies for treating a wide range of cancers. ANCO has negotiated discounted registration fees for physician members (and their nurses). Use priority code SP6 when registering at www.oncologycongress.com.

ASCO's 2007 Breast Cancer Symposium: Integrating Emerging Science into Clinical Practice

Registration and housing reservations are now open for ASCO's *2007 Breast Cancer Symposium* at the *San Francisco Marriott*, September 7-8th. Co-sponsored by the *American Society of Breast Disease*, *American Society of Breast Surgeons*, *ASCO*, *American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology*, and *Society of Surgical Oncology*, this groundbreaking event will include presentations about the latest multidisciplinary research, will feature topical education sessions, will provide attendees an opportunity to engage in clinically relevant in-depth discussions of the science most likely to have a lasting effect on the treatment of breast cancer, and will present oncologists with the most relevant and timely information they need to provide high-quality care to patients with breast cancer. Visit www.asco.org/meetings for more information

and to register.

ASCO's Electronic Health Records: 2007 Oncology Symposium

Electronic Health Records: 2007 Oncology Symposium will be held on September 19-20th in Dallas. The deadline for early registration is August 24th. The *Symposium* will help practitioners overcome the challenges of selecting and implementing an EHR product. Didactic sessions will be offered on such topics as improving office efficiency, the role of the health information technology physician champion, measuring the return on EHR investment, and workflow process redesign. Participants will also be able to explore specific EHR products during hands-on demonstrations in a controlled environment. The event will also feature an innovative *Vendor Challenge*, during which several EHR vendors will walk through a timed patient encounter in front of a live audience. Visit www.asco.org/ehr for more information and to register.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of possible interest to ANCO member practices are:

August 15th
Emerging Treatments for Mantle Cell Lymphoma
CancerCare
Telephone Education Workshop

August 15-17th
2nd Annual AAMDSIF Bone Marrow Failure Conference: Diagnostic and Treatment Issues for Hematology and Oncology Nurses
Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation (AAMDSIF)
Las Vegas

August 22nd
Communicating with Your Doctor About Adjuvant Treatment for Colorectal Cancer
CancerCare
Telephone Education Workshop

August 24th
Caring for Your Heart During Adjuvant Treatment for Breast Cancer
CancerCare
Telephone Education Workshop

September 6th

*Coping with Nausea and Vomiting from
Chemotherapy*
CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

September 7-9th

From Research to Action: Breaking New Ground
California Breast Cancer Research Program
Los Angeles

September 19th

*Caring for Your Bones When You Have Prostate
Cancer*
CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

September 20th

Update on Metastatic Breast Cancer
CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

September 27th

Medical Update on Ovarian Cancer
CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

September 27th

*Role of Culture in Medical Decisions: Provider and
Patient Perspectives*
Northern California Cancer Center
South San Francisco

Please contact the ANCO office for more
information about these meetings.

MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES & BENEFITS

[Editor's Note: All ANCO members are also eligible for
several tangible benefits.]

Benefits

ANCO continues to seek ways to make
membership more beneficial. The *Board*
identifies, reviews, and approves of additional
membership benefits. In addition to the benefits
derived from its advocacy, educational, and
information dissemination activities, ANCO
members may also benefit from several tangible
benefits from a number of vendors, including:

- **California Oncology Consortium
(COC) Group Purchasing Organization**

(GPO). The COC GPO has preferred
vendor agreements and discounted
pricing with *International Oncology
Network (ION)/Oncology Supply (OS)*,
McKesson Specialty Oncology Services
(formerly *National Oncology Alliance* or
NOA), and OTN/Onmark. Contact your
local ION/OS (Doug Storer at (650)
219-9282 or
douglas.storer@iononline.com; or Paul
Sullivan at (602) 391-9166 or
paul.sullivan@iononline.com),
McKesson/NOA (Scot Wagner at (866)
466-2462 or swagner@noainc.com; or
Patrick Walsh at (415) 793-8736 or
patrick.walsh@mckesson.com), or
OTN/Onmark (Jennifer Semanik at
(415) 497-2750 or Tony Policani at
(509) 995-0280 or
anthony.policoni@otnnet.com; or
Monique Weston at (650) 871-2108 or
monique.weston@onmarkservices.com)
for more information.

- ***IntrinsiQ's IntelliDose Discount
Program*** makes *IntelliDose*, a clinical
oncology software solution, available to
ANCO members at a reduced price.
Contact Louis Diodoro at *IntrinsiQ*
directly at (800) 565-2279, x504 or
louis.diodoro@intrinsiq.com for more
information about *IntrinsiQ Research* and
IntelliDose or visit www.intrinsiq.com.

- ***Oncology Pharmaceutical Services
(OPS)***, a division of *US Oncology*.
Contact Sean Taylor at (415) 235-4673
or sean.taylor@usonology.com for more
information.

ANCO and *McKesson Specialty Oncology
Services* have agreed to make OncoEMR, an
oncology-specific Web-based electronic medical
record, available to ANCO members at a
significant discount. For more information about
OncoEMR, please contact your McKesson/NOA
representative.

ANCO and *McKesson Specialty Oncology
Services* will present a teleconference on
TotalView, a web-based reimbursement
management solution on Tuesday, August 28th at
12PM. RSVP with your name, practice
affiliation, and ANCO membership via e-mail to

erin.crum@mckesson.com.

Onmark recently announced the results of its second annual *Office-Based Oncology Business Benchmarking Survey*. The results are published in the July 2007 issue of the *Journal of Oncology Practice*. **Onmark's** next **CORE** webcast, *Improving Profitability Through Financial Measurement & Management* takes place on Tuesday, August 7th and Wednesday, August 8th, at 9AM. Visit www.onmarkservices.com (Events) for more information and to register.

A replay of the *Introduction to OPS* webcast is available at www.opspharmacist.com/ancowebcast.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Individual Member News

The ANCO Directory of Members 2007 was published and mailed to ANCO physician members; nurse and office manager contacts; and, Corporate Member representatives at the end of June 2007. Additional copies are available from the ANCO office upon request. Please verify your *Directory* entry and contact the ANCO office with any corrections, additions, and/or deletions. The next *Directory* will be published in June 2008.

The following **update(s) to the *Directory*** should be inserted in the appropriate location(s):

ALPHABETICAL DIRECTORY OF PHYSICIAN MEMBERS

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Institutional Member News

ANCO thanks the following **Institutional Members** for their support:

- *Stanford University Medical Oncology*
- *University of California, Davis, Cancer Center*
- *University of California, San Francisco*

For information on **continuing medical education meetings organized by our Institutional Members**, please visit:

- med.stanford.edu/seminars/cme-all.jsp?qcme=on
- www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/conferences
- www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date

Stanford's *GI Cancers* takes place at the *Mauna Lani Bay Resort* on the Kohala Coast, Hawaii, on October 18-20th. This three-day national conference will bring together leading experts in the fields of gastroenterology and radiation oncology to highlight advances in the diagnosis and treatment of advanced gastrointestinal cancers. Visit www.cme.stanfordhospital.com for more information.

UCD's *8th Annual Advances in Oncology* takes place at the *Hyatt Regency* in Sacramento on October 20th.

Simply the Best: The Bonnie J. Addario A Breath Away from the Cure Foundation's Annual Dinner Gala takes place in San Francisco on

November 9th. For more information, please call (415) 357-1278 or visit www.abaftc.org.

The 9th Annual UCSF/UCD Thoracic Oncology Conference takes place in San Francisco on November 17th. Visit www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU07004 for more information.

Corporate Member News

ANCO thanks the following Corporate Members for their generous support that enables ANCO to provide services to the hematology/oncology community in Northern California, and to provide its members and their patients with substantial benefits in the areas of advocacy, education, and information dissemination:

AMGEN • Abraxis Oncology
 Alexion Pharmaceuticals • AstraZeneca
 Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals
 biogenIDEC
 Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology
 Cephalon Oncology • Clariant Diagnostics
 Eisai • Enzon Pharmaceuticals
 Genentech BioOncology
 Genitope Corporation • Genomic Health
 Genzyme Oncology
 International Oncology Network
 Lash Group Healthcare Consultants
 Lilly Oncology
 McKesson Specialty Oncology Services
 MedImmune Oncology • MGI Pharma
 Millennium • Novartis Oncology
 Oncology Pharmaceutical Services
 Oncology Supply • Onmark
 Ortho Biotech • OSI Pharmaceuticals • OTN
 Pfizer Oncology • Pharmion
 Roche Oncology • Sanofi Aventis Oncology
 Schering-Plough Oncology

We especially wish to thank and welcome *Alexion Pharmaceuticals*, *Eisai*, and *Genzyme Oncology* as new Corporate Members in 2007. We regret to announce that *GlaxoSmithKline*, *Matrix Oncology*, and *SuperGen* are no longer Corporate Members of ANCO.

Alexion Pharmaceuticals presents *The Evolution of PNH: Diagnosis to Current Therapeutic Options* with Patrick Fogarty, M.D., *UC San Francisco*, on Tuesday, August 14th at the *Presidio*

Golf Club in San Francisco and with Ilene Weitz, M.D., *University of Southern California*, on Thursday, August 23rd at the *San José Fairmont*. Please see the attached meeting announcements for more information. To register for these meetings please e-mail Christine Kostanecki at kostaneckic@alxn.com. An additional PNH program in Sacramento on October 2nd with Ted Wun, M.D., *UC Davis* is being planned.

Clinical Trial News

ASCO's *Clinical Trials Workshop* takes place October 26-28th at the *Grand Hyatt in Denver, Colorado*. Register by Thursday, August 23rd to take advantage of reduced registration fees. Clinical trials are crucial for developing better methods of preventing, detecting, and treating cancer. ASCO's *Clinical Trials Workshop* helps oncologists, nurses, and other members of the research team evaluate, integrate, and conduct clinical trials in the community practice setting. This CME-certified workshop provides practical tools not currently offered in fellowship training programs or most continuing education materials. The program focuses on four themes:

- Role of the oncology team
- Clinical trials procedures
- Selection of trials
- Communicating with patients about clinical trials

Attendance is limited to enhance audience participation. For more information, visit www.asco.org/ctw.

Publications, Services, & Surveys

ANCO is conducting its biennial *Practice Staff Salary Survey* in 3Q07. Survey packets were mailed to each ANCO member practice in early June. Data collected will be compared with that collected in 2005 and earlier. Please be sure to complete and return the ANCO *Practice Staff Salary Survey* as soon as possible.

The July/August (Vol. 22, No. 4) issue of ACCC's *Oncology Issues* features articles on cancer survivorship. Visit www.accc-cancer.org/ONIS/onis_archives.asp to view these articles.