

# ANCO FAX News

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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 November 9<sup>th</sup>. 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.]

The *United States Food and Drug Administration* has provided an assessment of CMS's ESA NCD to *Congress*. The letter makes clear that:

- FDA sees no quality of life benefit from the use of ESAs: "There is no evidence that ESAs result in improved survival,

**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.

tumor control, health-related quality of life at any hemoglobin level in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.”

- Medicare's new NCD is consistent with the FDA label: “FDA believes that the approved labeling and the CMS NCD are generally consistent in their recommendations regarding the use of ESAs in patients with cancer undergoing chemotherapy.”
- Medicare's NCD is consistent with recent research: “FDA believes that the NCD is generally consistent with the available data and the published scientific literature.”

**Members of Congress continue to weigh in with CMS on coverage of ESAs.** *Representatives* Anna Eshoo and Mike Rogers have introduced HJRes54 disapproving CMS's ESA NCD. *Senate Finance Committee Chair* Max Baucus has introduced a companion bill in the *Senate*. If passed by both the *House* and *Senate* and signed by the *President*, this legislation would have the force of law and would prohibit CMS from implementing the coverage change. In addition, *Representative* Stephen Cohen has introduced HRes681 urging CMS to reconsider its coverage decision on ESAs and consult with members of the oncology community to make appropriate revisions to its policy. This resolution is a companion bill to the *Senate* resolution passed September 4<sup>th</sup>. ANCO and ASCO applaud *Representatives* Cohen, Eshoo, Rogers, and *Senator* Baucus for their action and their continued commitment to cancer care. Please call your *Representatives* and *Senators*, tell him or her the effect this policy change is having on your practice and your patients, and urge him or her to co-sponsor these important pieces of legislation.

**ASCO continues to outreach to CMS and has formally requested that they reconsider the ESA NCD.** CMS responded with six questions that ASCO is currently addressing. At this point, CMS has neither accepted nor rejected ASCO's formal request for reconsideration.

A recording of ASCO's **national audioconference and the presentation materials** are available at [www.asco.org/ESAAudiocall](http://www.asco.org/ESAAudiocall) or via [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org). **CMS's ESA NCD and FAQs** are also

available at [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org).

**An updated ASCO/ASH guideline on the use of ESAs in patients with cancer** has been released. The updated guideline was derived from systematic reviews and analysis of published clinical trials. It outlines the clotting risks of ESAs, makes recommendations on usage, and provides insights on disease progression and patient survival. Specifically, the guideline:

- Declares epoetin and darbepoetin equally safe and effective.
- Recommends the use of ESAs as a treatment option for cancer patients who become anemic as a result of chemotherapy when their hemoglobin approaches or falls below 10g/dL, as well as patients with low-risk myelodysplasia.
- Suggests that when using ESAs, hemoglobin can be raised to (or near) a concentration of 12 at which point the dosage should be titrated to maintain that level. Dose reductions are also recommended when hemoglobin rise exceeds 1g/dL in any two-week period or when the hemoglobin level exceeds 11g/dL.
- Recommends discontinuing use of ESAs beyond six to eight weeks if a patient has not responded to the drug.
- Recommends monitoring the iron levels of patients being treated with ESAs and providing supplements accordingly.
- Cautions against using ESAs for cancer patients not receiving chemotherapy since recent trials have shown increased thromboembolic risks and decreased survival under these circumstances.

The guideline was published ahead of print at [bloodjournal.org](http://bloodjournal.org) and [jco.org](http://jco.org) on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The guideline will be published in print in both journals on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**ASCO seeks member feedback on CMS's ESA NCD.** Please provide your input on the following questions:

- How has the ESA national Medicare coverage policy affected your practice?

- How is your practice planning to implement the new policy in terms of tracking and documentation?
- What concerns do you have about implementing the new policy?
- What additional clarification on the policy is needed?

Please email your responses to [practice@asco.org](mailto:practice@asco.org). For more information, please contact ASCO's *Cancer Policy & Clinical Affairs Department* at (704) 299-1050 or [publicpolicy@asco.org](mailto:publicpolicy@asco.org).

**Several 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. HR1078 (*Comprehensive Cancer Care Improvement Act of 2007*) would establish a new Medicare service for comprehensive cancer planning through the continuum of care. Finally, HR1108/S625 would give the *United States Food and Drug Administration* (FDA) the authority to regulate the tobacco industry for the first time. ASCO and ANCO urge you to contact your *Representatives* and *Senators* and ask them to support these pieces of legislation.

The 2008 physician election period for the Medicare Part B Drug Competitive Acquisition Program (CAP) began on October 1<sup>st</sup> and concludes on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The CAP is a voluntary program that offers physicians the option to acquire many injectable and infused

drugs they use in their practice from an approved CAP vendor, thus reducing the time they spend buying and billing for drugs. The 2008 CAP program will run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. Once a physician has elected to participate in CAP, they must obtain all drugs on the CAP drug list from the CAP drug vendor. Physicians can still continue to purchase and bill Medicare under the *Average Sale Price* (ASP) system for those drugs that are not provided by the physician's CAP vendor. CMS is offering a web based workshop on November 6<sup>th</sup> at 12:00PM Central Time for physicians electing to participate in the CAP in 2008. During this workshop, staff will provide tips on filling out the Physician Election Form and will be available to answer questions during a Q&A session. Registration information for this workshop can be found at [www.noridianmedicare.com/cap\\_drug/train/workshops/index.html](http://www.noridianmedicare.com/cap_drug/train/workshops/index.html). Additional information about the CAP is available at [www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/01\\_overview.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcquisforBios/01_overview.asp).

**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 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI).

**CMS's Doctor's Office Quality Information Technology University (DOQ-IT U)** supports health information technology (HIT) in physicians' offices. DOQ-IT U is an interactive, Web-based tool designed to provide solo and small-to-medium sized physician practices with the education for successful HIT adoption. For more information, visit the DOQ-IT U website at [elearning.qualitynet.org](http://elearning.qualitynet.org).

**ANCO and ASCO continue to work towards ensuring that people with cancer have access to quality cancer care in the community.** Practice resources are available at [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org) and [www.asco.org/mma](http://www.asco.org/mma), including:

- ASCO's *Adapting to Changes in Medicare 2007* PowerPoint presentation.
- The October 2007 quarterly update for the *Average Sales Price (ASP) Medicare Part B drugs pricing file*.

Members may also call/e-mail ASCO's billing and coding hotline at (703) 299-1054/[practice@asco.org](mailto:practice@asco.org) for up-to-date information on changes in coding for drug administration services, as well as billing and payments for drugs.

### **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.]

**To help physicians negotiate and manage complex third-party payor agreements, CMA has published a contracting tool kit** entitled *Taking Charge: Steps to Evaluating Relationships and Preparing for Negotiations—A Focus on Payor Contracting* that is available free to CMA members at the members-only website. Nonmembers can purchase the tool kit for \$100 in the CMA bookstore (call (800) 882-1262). This tool kit joins several other CMA tool kits (i.e., *Back to Basics: A Step-by-Step Guide to Maximizing Your Cash Flow, Getting Paid: Strategies to Maximize Reimbursement*) aimed at empowering physician practices vis-à-vis their relationships with private payors. Finally, 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. 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.

CMA's 2007 *California Physician's Legal*

*Handbook* is even more comprehensive than prior editions and comes in two formats: (1) a print version in an easy-to-handle soft cover binding, with a separate volume containing the Table of Contents and five indices (subjects, laws, forms, websites, and court cases), or (2) a fully searchable and hyperlinked CD-ROM, which contains all the contents of the print version, as well as interactive forms and sample letters physicians can customize using their word processing programs and hyperlinks to Findlaw for access to the cited court cases. Order online via the CMA Bookstore at [www.cmanet.org/bookstore/product.cfm?catid=3&productid=163](http://www.cmanet.org/bookstore/product.cfm?catid=3&productid=163).

### **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.]

The *Medicare B Resource (September 2007)* is available online at [www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider\\_news/mbr\\_sept07.pdf](http://www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider_news/mbr_sept07.pdf). Please note that the ESA article does not reflect current CMS coverage policy.

Visit [www.medicarenhic.com/cal\\_prov/updates.shtml](http://www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/updates.shtml) to learn **the latest information** (updated weekly) **from NHIC/Medicare**.

## **EDUCATION**

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

### **ASCO's 2008 Genitourinary Cancers Symposium**

*ASCO's 2008 Genitourinary Cancers Symposium: A Multidisciplinary Approach* will take place at the *San Francisco Marriott*, February 14-16<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The meeting is being hosted by ASCO in collaboration with the *American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology* and the *Society of Urologic Oncology*. Visit [www.asco.org/meetings](http://www.asco.org/meetings) for more information.

### Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of possible interest to ANCO member practices are:

October 30<sup>th</sup>

*Understanding Peripheral Neuropathy*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

November 1<sup>st</sup>

*Sailing into the Unknown: Contending with Loss*

Northern California Cancer Center

San Francisco

November 7<sup>th</sup>

*Living Each Day With Lung Cancer*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

November 9<sup>th</sup>

*Caregivers of Women Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

November 14<sup>th</sup>

*For Caregivers: Coping with a Loved One's Cancer*

*During the Holidays*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

November 15-17<sup>th</sup>

*4<sup>th</sup> International Conference: Expanding Horizons in Collaborative Cancer Care*

Society of Integrative Oncology

San Francisco

November 16<sup>th</sup>

*Living with Colon Cancer*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

December 1<sup>st</sup>

*Now What? The New Normal of Cancer*

*Survivorship After Treatment*

Northern California Cancer Center

San Francisco

December 5<sup>th</sup>

*Advances in the Treatment of Renal Cell Cancer*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

December 7<sup>th</sup>

*Medical Update on Pancreatic Cancer*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

December 8-11<sup>th</sup>

*49<sup>th</sup> Annual ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition*

American Society of Hematology

Atlanta

December 13<sup>th</sup>

*Update on the Treatment of Liver Cancer*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

December 19<sup>th</sup>

*The Latest Developments Reported at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium*

CancerCare

Telephone Education Workshop

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.]

### ANCO On-Line

ANCO's independent website at [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org) features:

- a general description and introduction to the *Association*, its activities, leadership, and membership benefits.
- advocacy information (including ANCO and ASCO Medicare resources).
- clinical and professional education meeting announcements and distributed materials.
- survey reports, publications, and ListServ.
- clinical trials information.
- links to affiliated organizations.
- updated physician, nurse, manager, and patient resources.

### ANCO On-Line ListServ

The ANCO *Online ListServ* is available to all ANCO physician members, nurses, practice managers, and Corporate Member representatives. It is a source for the latest

ANCO news and other information impacting hematology/oncology practices. It is also a way for ANCO members to communicate amongst themselves. To post an item to the ANCO *Online ListServ*, send e-mail to [anco@anco-online.org](mailto:anco@anco-online.org). (Please note: Only subscribers to the ANCO *Online ListServ* may post items and the ANCO Executive Director will review all postings for appropriate content. In addition, to communicate directly and privately with the ANCO Executive Director, send e-mail to [execdir@anco-online.org](mailto:execdir@anco-online.org).) All ANCO physician members and their staffs are encouraged to subscribe, participate, and use the ANCO *Online ListServ* to receive ANCO information electronically and to communicate with colleagues about issues of importance to hematology/oncology practice. To subscribe, send your e-mail address to the ANCO office at [execdir@anco-online.org](mailto:execdir@anco-online.org).

### 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](mailto:douglas.storer@iononline.com); or Paul Sullivan at (602) 391-9166 or [paul.sullivan@iononline.com](mailto:paul.sullivan@iononline.com)), McKesson/NOA (Scot Wagner at (866) 466-2462 or [swagner@noainc.com](mailto:swagner@noainc.com); or Patrick Walsh at (415) 793-8736 or [patrick.walsh@mckesson.com](mailto: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](mailto:anthony.policoni@otnnet.com); or Monique Weston at (650) 871-2108 or [monique.weston@onmarkservices.com](mailto:monique.weston@onmarkservices.com)) for more information.

- **Oncology Pharmaceutical Services (OPS)**, a division of *US Oncology*. Contact Sean Taylor at (415) 235-4673 or [sean.taylor@usoncology.com](mailto:sean.taylor@usoncology.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.

*Onmark* presents a webcast entitled *Using Technology to Improve Practice Efficiency on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 6 & 7<sup>th</sup>*. Community oncology practices are changing the way they think about and use technology to improve operational efficiency. During this webcast, participants will hear how two practice administrators implemented technology into their clinics. They will discuss success factors and pitfalls to avoid. In addition, *Onmark* presents a webcast entitled *A Treatment Continuum in mCRC: A Strategic Approach to Extend Survival on Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup>*. Enroll today at [www.onmarkservices.com](http://www.onmarkservices.com) (Events).

OTN has entered into an exclusive agreement with *Altos Solutions* that adds electronic medical record (EMR) functionality to OTN's current integrated Lynx technology platform. Lynx EMR provides broad oncology-specific electronic medical record capabilities and integrates directly with Lynx' existing automated charge capture, inventory management, and practice management tools.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### Annual Election

Four seats on the ANCO *Board of Directors* are up for election in 2007. ANCO seeks nominations for candidates for these seats. This year's election will be conducted via mail ballot in

December. Candidates with the top four vote totals will serve for three years (i.e., from 2008-2010, inclusive). Nominate an ANCO member (including yourself) to stand for election to the *Board* via FAX to the ANCO office at (415) 472-3961 no later than November 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Board of Directors**

The ANCO *Board of Directors* meets regularly by teleconference and occasionally in person to discuss issues affecting the *Association*, clinical and professional education, and ways to better serve the membership. *Board* meetings are open to individual physician members. The **next regularly scheduled ANCO Board of Directors teleconference** will take place on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Please call José Luis González, *ANCO Executive Director*, at (415) 472-3960 if you wish to participate in a future meeting.

### **Individual Member News**

ANCO member Barbara McAneny, M.D., has been nominated for an open position (undesigned specialty) on the ASCO *Board of Directors*. The ASCO *Annual Election* opens on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 and ANCO urges all members to vote prior to the close of the election on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

*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**

**May Lin Tao, M.D.**

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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](http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/cme-all.jsp?qcme=on)
- [www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/conferences](http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/conferences)
- [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date)

*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 9<sup>th</sup>. For more information, please call (415) 357-1278 or visit [www.abafctc.org](http://www.abafctc.org).

UCSF's Donald Abrams, M.D., is the *Program Co-Chair* for the *Society of Integrative Oncology's 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference: Expanding Horizons in Collaborative Cancer Care* taking place November 15-17<sup>th</sup> at the *Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel* in San Francisco. For additional information and to register, visit [www.integrativeonc.org](http://www.integrativeonc.org)

The *9<sup>th</sup> Annual UCSF/UCD Thoracic Oncology Conference* takes place in San Francisco on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Visit [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU07004](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU07004) for more information.

UCSF's *7th Annual UCSF Clinical Cancer Update* takes place at Lake Tahoe on January 25-27<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Visit [www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU08006](http://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MSU08006) for more information.

Stanford's *10<sup>th</sup> Annual Multidisciplinary Management of Cancers: A Case-based Approach* (formerly the *Northern California Tumor Board at Silverado*) will be presented by the *Stanford University School of Medicine* on March 14-16<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Contact Jennifer Schafer at (650) 724-2288 or [schafer@stanford.edu](mailto:schafer@stanford.edu) or visit [cancer.stanford.edu/calendar/events/2007/ammc.html](http://cancer.stanford.edu/calendar/events/2007/ammc.html) for more information.

*Stanford's* Branimir (Brandy) Sikic, M.D., has been nominated for an open position (undesigned specialty) on the ASCO *Board of Directors*. The ASCO *Annual Election* opens on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 and ANCO urges all members to vote prior to the close of the election on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

### 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:

*Abraxis Oncology • Alexion Pharmaceutical  
AMGEN • AstraZeneca  
Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals  
biogenIDEC  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology  
Celgene • 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  
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*

Renewal packages for ANCO 2008 Corporate Memberships were mailed to Corporate Member contacts in early October.

We especially wish to thank and welcome *Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Celgene, 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.

*Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology* informs ANCO that the *United States Food and Drug Administration* has granted approval of *Ixempra* as monotherapy for the treatment of patients with metastatic or locally advanced breast cancer in patients whose tumors are resistant or refractory to anthracyclines, taxanes, and capecitabine. The FDA has also granted approval of *Ixempra* in combination with capecitabine for the treatment of patients with metastatic or locally advanced breast cancer resistant to treatment with an anthracycline, and a taxane, or whose cancer is taxane resistant and for whom further anthracycline therapy is contraindicated.

*Genomic Health* informs ANCO that *Oncotype DX* has been included in updated guidelines on the use of breast cancer tumor markers by ASCO. The inclusion of *Oncotype DX* in ASCO's updated clinical practice guidelines represents a significant step forward for the role of molecular diagnostics in breast cancer treatment planning. The updated guidelines are online now and will appear in print in *JCO* on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Millennium* informs ANCO that the *United States Food and Drug Administration* has approved *Velcade* for use in patients with impaired kidney function. Impaired kidney function is a common complication in multiple myeloma patients. *Velcade* was already approved to treat multiple myeloma patients who have had at least one prior therapy and to treat mantle cell lymphoma.

### Clinical Trial News

The *National Cancer Institute* (NCI) has redesigned its clinical trials online portal making it easier to find clinical trial results by cancer type. Based on user feedback, many parts of the

site have been simplified and the search feature is now easier to use. To see the new search features and other educational materials for patients, family members, and researchers, go to [www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials](http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials). NCI also has a *Clinical Trials Education Series* to help recruit patients. It is available from (800) 4-CANCER or [www.cancer.gov/publications](http://www.cancer.gov/publications).

**BreastCancerTrials.org (BCT)** is a web-based, pilot project, to match breast cancer patients with clinical trials sponsored by the *National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Center for Bioinformatics*, the *University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Comprehensive Cancer Center*, and the *Center of Excellence for Breast Cancer Care*. Patients looking for trials may enter detailed information about their cancer history into a completely confidential and secure online database. The patient's *Personal Health Record (PHR)* is used to match the patient with breast cancer trials that medical researchers have registered with BCT. Visit [www.breastcancertrials.org](http://www.breastcancertrials.org) for more information.

Learn more about California's law requiring the coverage of routine care costs for patients enrolled in clinical trials at [www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/clinical\\_trials/bigc/](http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/clinical_trials/bigc/) where you can download ANCO's patient education brochure on SB37.

ANCO members can search information about Institutional Member's clinical trials at [www.anco-online.org/trials.html](http://www.anco-online.org/trials.html). A current list of UCD's active adult protocols is available at [ccresources.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/csr/content/clinicaltrialspublicreport.csr?adult=1](http://ccresources.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/csr/content/clinicaltrialspublicreport.csr?adult=1).

### **Patient News**

ASCO, in association with *People Living With Cancer (PLWC)*, has prepared and published several *Guides to Cancer*. These *Guides* provide information for patients on breast, colorectal, lung, and prostate cancers. For more information, please contact ASCO's *Communications and Patient Information Department* at (703) 519-2927 or [contactus@plwc.org](mailto:contactus@plwc.org).

**CaringBridge** is a nonprofit organization providing the most widely used free online service connecting patients to friends and families during their challenging times. For

additional information for you and your patients, visit [www.caringbridge.com](http://www.caringbridge.com).

**The HealthWell Foundation**, a non-profit, charitable organization, provides financial assistance to eligible patients to cover certain out-of-pocket health care costs, including coinsurance, copayments, and deductibles; health insurance premiums; and, the Medicare "donut hole" coverage gap. The *HealthWell Foundation* offers assistance in several disease areas, including the following that may be of interest to hematology/oncology providers and case managers:

- Chemotherapy induced anemia
- Chemotherapy induced neutropenia
- Multiple myeloma
- Myelodysplastic syndromes

Applications are available online at [www.healthwellfoundation.org](http://www.healthwellfoundation.org) or by calling (800) 675-8416.

**The Patient Access Network Foundation (PANF)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving access to needed health services for insured patients who cannot afford the out-of-pocket costs associated with their treatment. The *PAF Co-Pay Relief Program (CPR)* currently provides financial assistance to eligible patients who are being treated for brain, breast, colon, kidney, lung, pancreatic, and/or prostate cancers, lymphoma, macular degeneration, sarcoma, autoimmune disorders, and secondary issues as a result of chemotherapy treatment. Patients must financially and medically qualify to access co-payment assistance. Patients and physicians can contact the PAF CPR at (866) 512-3861 to initiate a request for assistance or request additional information, or visit [www.copays.org](http://www.copays.org) or [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org).

**The Patient Advocate Foundation's (PAF) Colorectal CareLine (CCL)** is a national toll free telephone hotline designed to offer assistance to all colorectal cancer patients and healthcare providers seeking educational resources, direct assistance with access to care issues, and/or financial aid for select patient needs, including lodging, transportation, childcare and other expenses associated with out-of-town treatment. The hotline can be accessed at (866) 657-8634 or

patients may visit [www.colorectalcareline.org](http://www.colorectalcareline.org).

### **Publications, Services, & Surveys**

You may already be familiar with ASCO's *Clinical Practice Guidelines*, but did you know they are accompanied by easy-to-use clinical tools? These tools include slide sets, and summaries of the guidelines, and may also include patient chart tools, such as flow sheets. In the midst of a busy practice, these tools enable oncologists to use the latest guidelines on emerging issues in clinical oncology. All of these tools are free of charge and available online through [www.asco.org/guidelines](http://www.asco.org/guidelines). ASCO's most recently promulgated/updated guidelines cover chemotherapy-related anemia, adjuvant therapy for non-small cell lung cancer, and breast cancer tumor marker testing.

**The Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI) is a practice-based quality improvement program developed by ASCO volunteers.** QOPI includes a set of quality measures, a specified chart selection methodology, a secure system for data entry, automated data analysis and reporting, and a network of resources for improvement. Twice a year, staff at participating practices conduct a retrospective review of patient charts. Following every data collection period, the QOPI system generates a report for each practice. QOPI data can be used to satisfy the new practice performance improvement requirement for *ABIM Maintenance of Certification*. Register for QOPI at [www.asco.org/QOPI](http://www.asco.org/QOPI).

ANCO distributed a brief **ANCO Member Experience with the Medicare RAC** survey on September 19<sup>th</sup> via FAX and e-mail. Of the approximately 100 practices that received the survey, only 13 responded. Here is a summary of the responding practices experience with Medicare's RAC process:

- All but one (1) of the responding practices had been RAC'd. Practices reported a range of 3 to more than 250 RAC audits.
- For those practices that were RAC'd, audits focused primarily on drug overpayments, and bone marrow aspirations and biopsies. Many of the drug overpayments were validly identified

and should have been identified upon payment and reported to the Part B carrier.

- Almost all practices responding had been RAC'd for the same procedure/drug on multiple occasions regardless of previous audit outcomes.
- Almost all practices responding had repaid funds based on initial RAC findings but had also appealed RAC audit findings. The appeals process was long and drawn out. Some practices reported that funds were both paid and recouped from current reimbursements resulting in double payment.
- The RAC process is viewed as time intensive and inefficient. Many RAC requests were for claims before the preceding three-year time allowed. The RAC did not rescind its requests for records based on this error until substantial work was performed by the practice.

ANCO has shared these results of the survey with the *California Medical Association* and *American Medical Association*. These organizations are working with CMS to improve the RAC process. For more information on the RAC, visit [www.cms.hhs.gov/rac](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/rac), or download CMA's On-Call Document #0625 at [www.cmanet.org/bookstore/cmaoncall.cfm](http://www.cmanet.org/bookstore/cmaoncall.cfm) (choose Medi-Cal & Medicare).

ANCO recently distributed (via FAX and e-mail) a brief **ANCO Member Survey on Private Payor Claims Processing**. If you did not received the survey, then please download one from [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org). The ANCO *Board of Directors* wishes to pursue details of ANCO member experience with regard to routine claims processing hassles encountered with private carriers. They will use the findings of the survey in developing more effective advocacy positions and strategies.