

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 routinely sent to physician member practices and corporate member contacts. The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on Friday, June 11th.

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; jlgonzalez@aol.com.

ADVOCACY

[*Editor's Note:* ANCO meets regularly with national, regional, and statewide organizations to discuss issues of importance to oncology practices and people with cancer.

We continually seek input from members on agenda items for these meetings. Send your issues to the ANCO office.]

ACCC, ASCO, 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). We regularly participate with these organizations on matters of

national importance to oncology practices.]

ASCO continues to work towards ensuring that people with cancer have access to quality cancer care in the community. Here are some of their current activities with respect to the *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003* (DIMA):

- *Representatives* Norwood (R-GA) and Capps (D-CA) are circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter, requesting other

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

- ☐ Physician Members
- ☐ Nurse & Office Managers
- ☐ Office Staff
- ☐ Colleagues & Representatives

The *Association of Northern California Oncologists* (ANCO) is an association of medical oncologists and hematologists dedicated to promoting high professional standards of oncology 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.

Members of Congress to join them in asking CMS to release the average sales price (ASP) data to *Congress* and the community as soon as possible. Visit www.asco.org/asco/downloads/norwood.capps_Sign_on_letter.pdf to read their letter.

- Former *Representative* Molinari (R-NY), head of one of Washington's most respected bi-partisan lobbying firms with impeccable credentials among members of *Congress* and their staffs in the leadership and on key *Committees* on both sides of the aisle, and her team are joining ASCO staff and legislative counsel on the Hill on a daily basis to convey the serious consequences DIMA will have on patients and cancer care.

- An AMA survey, developed with ASCO input, will be used to determine DIMA's effects on community-based practices in 2004. If you get a survey, then please fill it out.

- ASCO's *State/Regional Affiliate Presidents* met in Chicago on May 20th to review legislative priorities and grassroots initiatives related to community-based oncology.

- *Ask ASCO* kits containing materials on how DIMA affects cancer care can be downloaded from www.asco.org/mma and following the links to *Ask ASCO*.

Pharmaceutical companies have reported their **average sales price (ASP) data** (the basis for Medicare drug reimbursement in 2005) for the first quarter of 2004 to CMS. **It is very important for all community oncology practices to comment on CMS's ASP rule.** CMS needs to hear how problems relating to ASP's definition/reporting will impact community oncology practices and how Medicare drug reimbursement changes will impact your practice's ability to provide quality cancer care. Comments can be sent on-line by visiting www.regulations.gov/agcy_centersformedicareandmedicaid/services.cfm, and scrolling down to *Medicare Program: Manufacturer Submission of Manufacturer's Average Sales Price (ASP) Data for Medicare Part B Drugs and Biologicals, Submit*

a Comment on this Regulation. Send copies of your comments to your *Representatives* so that they understand the specific issues you face relative to declining Medicare reimbursement. The deadline for comments is June 7th.

The ANCO *Board of Directors* recognizes that its primary mission is to accurately reflect the views and needs of community oncologists in Northern California. Therefore, it recently surveyed member practices on their opinions of ASCO, COA, and their handling of DIMA. Here are the results:

Number of Surveys FAXed (including Institutional Members, 22) 117

Number of Surveys Received 20

Was your practice aware of ASCO's legislative position, strategy, and tactics for 2004? 19 Yes; 1 No

Does your practice support ASCO's legislative position, strategy, and tactics for 2004? 17 Yes; 3 No

Shall ANCO continue to support ASCO's legislative position, strategy, and tactics? 17 Yes; 3 No

Was your practice aware of COA? 16 Yes; 4 No

Was your practice aware of COA's legislative position, strategy, and tactics for 2004? 14 Yes; 6 No

Does your practice support COA's legislative position, strategy, and tactics for 2004? 7 Yes; 11 No

Has your practice contributed financially to COA? 0 Yes; 20 No

Has your practice contributed data to COA? 1 Yes; 18 No

Shall ANCO support COA's legislative position, strategy, and tactics? 6 Yes; 2 No

If your practice is familiar with both ASCO and COA, which organization represents your view more accurately? 10 ASCO; 3 COA; 5 Both equally; 1 Neither

If the two organizations had conflicting political positions, strategies, and tactics, which organization's position, strategy,

and tactics would you support?

13 ASCO; 3 COA

The ANCO *Board of Directors* will factor these results into its future deliberations.

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 cooperate on several joint ventures and coordinate activities in the advocacy and membership benefit arenas. Each is represented at the *Board* meeting of the other.]

ANCO is cooperating with CMA as it prepares to launch a survey of physician practice costs. Existing available sources of practice costs tend to have limited information about the experience in California and often fail to include the cost of solo and small group practice physicians. CMA is working with the accounting firm of *Moss Adams* to collect and analyze the data. The survey process will run from June 1st through July 15th. Since *Moss Adams* will serve as the repository for the survey data, the only cost detail information that CMA will have access to will be deidentified. *Moss Adams* will keep the information confidential and may not use any of the information received for any promotional or marketing activity and may not disclose it to a third party. Watch for details in the near future.

State Senator Deborah Ortiz's Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 25, asking Congress to correct the cancer care provisions of Medicare reform, passed the *State Senate* and is being considered by the *Assembly Health Committee*. ANCO urges its members to contact their *State Assemblymembers* in support of SJR25.

ANCO endorses the California Tobacco Control Alliance's public action campaign entitled *Smoking Cessation Benefits Everyone* and encourages all its members to support this campaign by signing the letter at www.cessationbenefitseveryone.org (see attached).

NHIC/Medicare & DHS/MediCal

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

Visit www.medicarenhic.com/whats_new/whats_new.shtml to learn the **latest information from NHIC/Medicare**.

NHIC/Medicare has proposed a draft *Local Coverage Determination* (LCD) for darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp; J0880, Q0137). Visit www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/lmrp/draft/darbepoetinalfa_draftlmrp.htm to read the draft LCD. In summary, the draft LCD covers darbepoetin alfa for its labeled and compendia listed indications, that is:

- Anemia of end stage renal disease (ESRD) patients requiring dialysis.
- Anemia of chronic renal failure (CRF).
- Anemia due to chemotherapy for non-myeloid malignancy.
- Anemia as a result of malignancy.

However, the draft LCD also:

- reduces the number of covered indications included in the NHIC/Medicare website article dated January 8th, 2004 thereby limiting beneficiary access.
- establishes a fixed hemoglobin initiation level of 11g/dl rather than allowing for a treatment target (per current policy), setting a different standard of care for beneficiaries receiving darbepoetin alfa.
- does not allow for FDA-approved dosing of up to 4.5mcg/kg in chemotherapy-induced anemia, potentially limiting dosing flexibility for providers and beneficiaries.
- requires a paper claim with documentation to be submitted for every claim where the hemoglobin is over 12g/dl, increasing administrative burden on providers and the carrier.
- requires submission of three (3) ICD-9 codes for chemotherapy-induced anemia, increasing coding complexity and potential coding errors.

The notice and comment period for this draft LCD ends on June 4th. It is very important for NHIC/Medicare to receive comment from local providers regarding how they use darbepoetin alfa. Please review it and submit your comments to NHIC/Medicare at canhicmrpfeedback@exwe01.exch.eds.com with a copy to ANCO at jlgonzalez@aol.com.

The next *NHIC/Medicare Advisory Forum* (MAF) teleconference takes place on June 15th; the next *NHIC/Medicare Carrier Advisory Committee* (CAC) meeting takes place in Oakland in July 21st; the next ANCO•MOASC meeting with NHIC/Medicare will take place at a date and location to be determined.

EDUCATION

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

Reception in Honor of Margaret A. Tempero, M.D., ASCO President

Join your colleagues from ANCO and MOASC, Dr. Tempero's colleagues from UCSF and our other Institutional Members, as well as other national oncology leaders at a reception at ASCO's 40th *Annual Meeting* in honor of her exemplary leadership of ASCO during this pivotal time in community oncology. This event takes place on Sunday, June 6th, at 5PM at the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans and is open to ANCO and MOASC members, representatives from sponsoring organizations (*biogenIDEC, Genentech BioOncology, Genomic Health, Glaxo SmithKline, MGI Pharma, Ortho Biotech, and Pfizer Oncology*), and other invitees. Invitations were mailed in mid April.

SAVE THE DATE! **ANCO's Annual ASCO Highlights 2004**

On Tuesday evening, September 14th, in Oakland, a distinguished faculty from ANCO's Institutional Members will present ANCO's annual *ASCO Highlights 2004*. This year's

meeting will be accredited by ASCO. Watch for announcements in July.

SAVE THE DATE! **ANCO's 2004 Annual Meeting**

ANCO will hold its 2004 *Annual Meeting* from Friday evening, October 1st, through Sunday morning, October 3rd at the Hyatt Regency Monterey. Physician members and their nurse and practice managers should plan on attending this event. A distinguished national and local faculty will present the latest national and statewide legislative and regulatory information along with how to use practice management and technology to meet the challenges faced by medical oncology practice in 2005 and beyond. Watch for details and announcements in July.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

June 5-8th
40th Annual Meeting
American Society of
Clinical Oncology
New Orleans, LA

June 10-11th
Pain and End-of-Life Care
University of California,
San Francisco

San Francisco

June 19th
ASCO Review
International Oncology Network
Southern California

June 25th
Pancreatic Cancer 2004: Advances and Challenges
University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco

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

ANCO thanks

biogenIDEC, Genentech BioOncology,
Genomic Health, Glaxo SmithKline,
MGI Pharma, Ortho Biotech,
&
Pfizer Oncology

for supporting clinical and professional education.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

[Editor's Note: All ANCO members are eligible for benefits from the *California Oncology Consortium* (COC) and *Hematology Oncology Leadership Network* (HOLN).]

ANCO On-Line

ANCO's independent website has been redesigned and re-launched at www.anco-online.org.

California Oncology Consortium (COC)

The COC is a cooperative venture of ANCO and MOASC. The *Consortium* maintains a web site (www.californiaoncology.org); has a ListServ for the exchange of general/administrative and clinical information; and, has a group purchasing organization (GPO).

Hematology Oncology Leadership Network (HOLN)

HOLN is a network of state oncology and oncology manager societies from Northern and Southern California, Connecticut, Georgia, New Jersey, Ohio/West Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia. As an ANCO member, you may enroll in HOLN and benefit from discounted contracting with several major pharmaceutical manufacturers for medical supplies and drugs. HOLN-contracted prices are honored at several distributors, including *Oncology Supply* and *Oncology Therapeutics Network*.

Visit ANCO
at the State/Regional Affiliate Booth
at ASCO in New Orleans!

oncology political action committee (PAC).

- *ASCO Highlights 2004* and the *Annual Meeting*.
- Additional membership benefits, including a consultancy service and template patient letters.
- ANCO's activities at the *ASCO Annual Meeting* in New Orleans.

Contact the ANCO office for additional information on any of these items.

The ANCO *Board of Directors* meets regularly by teleconference and occasionally in person to discuss issues affecting the *Association*, clinical and professional education meeting proposals, and ways to better serve the membership. *Board* meetings are open to the membership. The **next regularly scheduled ANCO Board of Directors teleconference** will take place on July 14th. Please call José Luis González, *ANCO Executive Director*, at (415) 472-3960 if you wish to participate in a future meeting.

Individual Member News

The ANCO Directory of Members &

Membership Information 2003 was published and mailed to all members in June 2003. An updated edition will be published in June 2004. Additional copies are available from the ANCO office.

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

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

Board of Directors

The ANCO *Board of Directors* teleconferenced on May 13th. Among the issues discussed and/or acted upon were:

- National and California legislative/regulatory issues, including relationships between ASCO and the *Community Oncology Alliance* (COA), ANCO's role in the *California Medical Association*, and formation of a California

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support—patient assistance program to
patients without insurance coverage
(based on financial need); access to
insurance guidelines for private, federal,
and state plans; verification of insurance
coverage; and, coding and billing
assistance.

Corporate Member News

ANCO thanks the following **Corporate Members** for their generous support that enables ANCO to grow and expand its services for the 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 • APP/Abraxis Oncology
AstraZeneca • Aventis
Bayer Biologicals • Berlex Laboratories
biogenIDEC
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology
Cell Therapeutics • Chiron Corporation
Eli Lilly and Company
Genentech BioOncology • Genomic Health
Genta • Glaxo SmithKline
International Oncology Network
Lash Group Healthcare Consultants
Ligand Pharmaceuticals
MedImmune Oncology • MGI Pharma
Millennium • National Oncology Alliance
Novartis Oncology • Oncology Supply
Oncology Therapeutics Network
Oncotech • Ortho Biotech
OSI Pharmaceuticals • Pfizer Oncology
Roche Oncology • Sanofi-Synthelabo
Schering Oncology/Biotech
SuperGen • US Oncology • Wyeth Oncology

We especially wish to thank and welcome *Genomic Health*, *Genta*, *Lash Group Healthcare Consultants*, *OSI Pharmaceuticals*, and *Schering Oncology/Biotech* as new Corporate Members in 2004. *IMPATh* has resigned as a Corporate Member of ANCO.

Institutional Member News

We thank our current roster of **Institutional Members** for their support:

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

ANCO members can obtain information about our Institutional Member's clinical trials via www.anco-online.org/advocacy.html.

UC Davis, ANCO, and several other local agencies are cooperating on a *National Institutes of Health* project aimed at overcoming barriers to early phase clinical trials. You can learn more about this project at www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/clinical_trials/bigc/

UCSF's *Pain and End-of-Life Care* takes place in San Francisco on June 10-11th. This course is designed for all physicians, nurses, and pharmacists who care for patients in pain or with life-threatening illness. It meets California's requirement that physicians take 12 hours of CME in pain and palliative care. Visit medicine.ucsf.edu/cme/2004cal/M04462.html for more information.

ANCO also endorses the CMA's *Pain Palliation and Politics: Pain Management and End-of-Life Care in California's Regulatory Environment* programs. The Northern California meeting will take place on September 10-11th at the Sacramento Convention Center/Sheraton Grand Hotel.

UCSF's *Pancreatic Cancer 2004: Advances and Challenges* takes place in San Francisco on June 25-26th. This course is designed to bring together senior leaders and new investigators who can establish the status of the field, present new research, and identify opportunities for further investigation. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MMJ04008 for more information.

Publications, Services, & Surveys

It is not too late to enroll in the ANCO *DIMA Practice Preparedness Survey*, consisting of the hands-on help of two expert reimbursement and practice management consultants via a one-day practice site visit designed to assess and

improve the financial health of your practice. Member practices and ANCO will share the cost of the site visit. Announcements of this *Survey* were FAX broadcast in mid April.

ANCO also recently FAXed to all member practices a **model practice statement to patients regarding DIMA**. A .pdf version of the document for reproduction and distribution or a .txt version of the document for editing is available from the ANCO office via e-mail at jlgonzalez@aol.com.

ANCO and *Novartis Oncology*, are distributing copies of *Living with Breast Cancer*, a film produced by Alan Kramer, M.D., *ANCO Treasurer*. *Novartis* representatives will deliver a choice of VHS videotape or DVD to each ANCO member practice beginning in mid-May. The film explores how adolescent and teenage children cope when their mothers are diagnosed with breast cancer. The film was a finalist at the 2002 *Freddie Awards* for medical and health media excellence.

Membership Dues for 2004

Final notices of membership renewal were mailed in early April 2004. Return your 2004 membership dues to ANCO at your earliest convenience. Be sure to take advantage of dues discounts and provide ANCO with the name(s) of an office and nurse manager contact(s). Those not renewing their membership by June 1st will be deleted from the *Directory of Members*, will no longer be eligible for participation in ANCO's discounted pharmaceutical pricing programs, or receive any other ANCO benefits. Contact the ANCO office if you did not receive or have misplaced your membership dues renewal notice.

ANCO seeks new members. All members of a practice should join ANCO. Provide the ANCO office with the names and addresses of colleagues you would like invited to join ANCO.

A larger ANCO is a stronger ANCO!