

# ANCO FAX News

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Vol. 3, No. 12

June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004

## 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 25<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; [jlgonzalez@aol.com](mailto: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):

- CMS Administrator Mark McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., met with the ASCO Board and Committee Chairs to discuss ASCO's

**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.

priorities related to Medicare reimbursement and coverage policy at ASCO's 40<sup>th</sup> *Annual Meeting* and indicated a desire to work with oncologists to look at more efficient and effective ways to make coverage decisions, as well as address any access issues that may arise as a result of DIMA.

- DIMA was the focus of a special session at the *Annual Meeting* led by Joseph S. Bailes, M.D., co-Chair of ASCO's newly formed *Government Relations Council*, and ASCO Counsel Terry Coleman. The session provided a detailed perspective of all the factors affecting the future of changes to DIMA and how ASCO's extensive outreach on *Capitol Hill* is being supported with a media and grassroots action plan launching this summer in key regions.
- ASCO's *Public Service Award*, given at the *Annual Meeting* to individuals who through their advocacy at the national and community levels have increased public awareness about cancer and have had a positive impact on cancer-related policies and programs, was awarded this year to *Representatives* Charlie Norwood (R-GA) and Lois Capps (D-CA) in recognition of their extraordinary efforts to promote legislative solutions to preserve high-quality cancer care.

The **ASCO Clinical Practice Committee** (CPC) met on Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. Peter Paul Yu, M.D., ANCO *President*, John A. Keech, Jr., D.O., *Chair*, ASCO CPC, and Peter D. Eisenberg, M.D., represented ANCO at this meeting. Among the items discussed were:

- A *Government Relations Council*, co-Chaired by Dave Johnson, M.D., incoming ASCO *President* and Joseph S. Bailes, M.D., will lead ASCO's legislative/regulatory advocacy efforts.
- ASCO's **legislative/regulatory priority** is to obtain a freeze on administration payments while awaiting the MedPAC study on the impact of the DIMA. *Congress* will recess in late June

and early July. Members are encouraged to meet with their *Congressional* representatives at this time to inform them of DIMA's impact on their oncology practices and constituents in 2005. Representatives should be asked to request that CMS release ASP data as soon as possible. Please contact ASCO at grassroots@asco.org or (703) 299-1050 if you plan on meeting with your *Congressional* representatives as they can help you plan and prepare for the meeting.

- The **state/regional affiliates** (state societies) and community oncologists are ASCO's number one priority in the new strategic plan. Look for additional *Best of ASCO* programs, a new edition of *Practical Tips for the Practicing Oncologist* (to be published in 2004 and e-updated regularly), a practice management newsletter and educational series, and initiatives to integrate quality measures and information technology into the practice setting. Additional practice management services will be developed and delivered.
- The *American Medical Association's* (AMA) *Relative Value Update Committee* (RUC) is focusing on the DIMA mandated reevaluation of infusion codes and the *American Society of Hematology* (ASH) and ASCO are working together to obtain a permanent seat on the RUC.
- ASCO will present several new oncology codes for consideration by the *AMA CPT Advisory Committee*, including multiple drug infusion codes, a new code for the administration of monoclonal antibodies, allowing use of 96530 for port flushes, an emergency management code, and a chemotherapy management code.
- ASCO and the *Administrators in Oncology/Hematology Assembly* (AOHA) are completing a **service line survey** of oncology practices to help identify and quantify all the elements of oncology

practice. Survey results will help define and value new code proposals.

- CMS has issued new regulations for **incident to services**. If different, then the ordering physician must be identified and the supervising physician's PIN and signature must be used to submit the claim. Associate each physician to the services claimed.
- CMS has issued new regulations with regard to **physician self-referral**. First, writing a prescription does not constitute a referral to the drug's manufacturer, even if the prescribing physician serves as a consultant to the manufacturer. Second, physician compensation can be based on chemotherapy administration services. However, while ASCO believes that compensation can also be based on the amount of drugs ordered, the CMS regulations remain ambiguous.
- CMS is considering differential reimbursement based on quality of care (i.e., **pay for performance**). ASCO's quality initiatives are, therefore, extremely relevant. CMS is also considering **disease management** systems.
- AMA and CMS are discussing repairs to the combined payment system for **skilled nursing facilities** (SNFs).
- CMS is struggling with DIMA's **competitive acquisition** provisions and asking for guidance from physicians on how drugs are currently ordered, acquired, inventoried, stored, etc. In addition, questions regarding the handling of patient copays, wastage, returned drugs, and patient insurance data remain.
- Patients should (and their providers should encourage them to) call 1-800 Medicare to report **access to care** problems.
- ASCO's **Health Services Committee** will continue to develop practice guidelines, but release them in new formats that are of more utility for the practicing oncologist. They will also

develop tools to assess what guidelines are being used and by whom. Finally, they will also focus on ways to implement the findings of ASCO's *National Initiative on Cancer Care Quality* (NICCQ), especially ways of improving documentation of cancer care.

- ASCO's **Public Issues Committee** will focus on broad public health and cancer issues, especially cancer care workforce issues.
- ASCO's **Career Development Committee** is assessing how changes in the current practice environment are impacting young physician decisions to enter clinical practice.
- **Patient advocacy** groups, led by the *National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship* (NCCS) is working within the *Cancer Leadership Council* and the state/regional affiliates to appropriately mobilize patients with respect to DIMA.

ASCO, in collaboration with the *Oncology Nursing Society* (ONS), has developed a new workshop designed to increase accrual to clinical trials by instructing community oncologists about the integration of clinical trials into their practices. *Clinical Trials for Workshop for the Community Oncology Team* will take place in Dallas on October 15-17<sup>th</sup>. Attendance is limited to 100 participants. Applications for attendance may be downloaded from [www.asco.org](http://www.asco.org) (meetings and education) and must be submitted electronically by Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. For more information, please contact the ANCO office.

### **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 has joined other specialty societies and the CMA in supporting the campaign to affirm the *Health Insurance Act* (SB2) and opposing attempts to repeal this law on the**

**November 2004 ballot.** When fully implemented, SB2 would provide health and financial security to millions of Californians that now get coverage through their employer, expand coverage to another one million Californians, and ensure fairness to employers who provide such benefits but have to compete against those large employers that do not.

**ANCO is cooperating with CMA in its survey of physician practice costs.** The survey process runs from June 1<sup>st</sup> through July 15<sup>th</sup>. You can participate in the survey by visiting [www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=WEB2J8MQRUTQ](http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=WEB2J8MQRUTQ).

ANCO 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 10-11<sup>th</sup> at the Sacramento Convention Center/Sheraton Grand Hotel. The AMA also offers a 12-hour **online CME course in pain management** at [www.ama-cmeonline.com](http://www.ama-cmeonline.com). Finally, an ANCO member recommends the online pain management and palliative care education available at [www.netce.com/courselist.asp](http://www.netce.com/courselist.asp).

### **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.]

The **Medicare B Resource** (June 2004) is now available online at [www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider\\_news/ca-mbr/04-2.pdf](http://www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider_news/ca-mbr/04-2.pdf). Among the items most relevant to oncologists are:

- Annual update of HCPCS codes used for SNF consolidated billing enforcement (page 9)
- Incident-to services (page 31)
- Medicare physician fee schedule database (MPFSDB)—First and second updates (pages 35-36)

- MMA drug pricing update—Drug exceptions (page 41)
- MMA payment for chemotherapy administration services, nonchemotherapy drug infusion services, and drug injection services (page 47)
- Hypothermia for the treatment of cancer (page 68)
- Modifier 25 (page 70)

Visit [www.medicarenhic.com/whats\\_new/whats\\_new.shtml](http://www.medicarenhic.com/whats_new/whats_new.shtml) to learn the **latest information from NHIC/Medicare**.

### **Private Payers**

It has come to ANCO's attention that *Blue Cross of California* (for some of its PPO contracts) has lowered drug reimbursement and not increased chemotherapy administration reimbursement. We urge all

members to compare their *Blue Cross* reimbursements with their contracts and report any discrepancies to ANCO and *Blue Cross*.

### **EDUCATION**

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

### **ANCO's Annual ASCO Highlights 2004**

On Tuesday evening, September 14<sup>th</sup>, at The Claremont Resort in Oakland, a distinguished faculty from ANCO's Institutional Members will present ANCO's annual *ASCO Highlights 2004*. This year's agenda and faculty is:

- **Hematological Malignancies**  
Steve Coutre, M.D., *Stanford*
- **GI Cancers & Moderator**  
George A. Fisher, M.D., *Stanford*
- **GU Cancers**  
Primo Lara, Jr., M.D., *UC Davis*
- **Breast Cancer**  
Hope Rugo, M.D., *UC San Francisco*

ANCO thanks

AstraZeneca, AMGEN, biogenIDEC,  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology,  
Eli Lilly and Company, Genentech BioOncology,  
Genta, MGI Pharma, Novartis Oncology,  
Ortho Biotech, OSI Pharmaceuticals,  
&  
Pfizer Oncology

for supporting clinical and professional education.

### • Lung Cancer

Heather Wakelee, M.D., *Stanford*

ANCO's *ASCO Highlights 2004* is accredited by ASCO for 3 CEUs. Watch for meeting announcements and registration forms in July.

### *ANCO's 2004 Annual Meeting*

ANCO will hold its 2004 *Annual Meeting* from Friday evening, October 1<sup>st</sup>, through Sunday morning, October 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 techniques and information technology to meet the challenges faced by medical oncology practice in 2005 and beyond. The topic(s)/speaker(s) include:

- Dean Gesme, M.D., *Chair*, ASCO CPC on national legislative/regulatory issues.
- Steve Thompson, CMA, & *Senator* Deborah Ortiz, *Chair*, *California State Senate Health Committee*, on California legislative/regulatory issues.
- Joseph S. Bailes, M.D., Peter D. Eisenberg, M.D., and Joe Simone, M.D., on the quality of cancer care.
- Catherine Harvey, Ph.D., on oncology nursing.
- Bobbi Buell, M.B.A., and Patty Falconer, M.B.A., on ANCO's DIMA Practice Preparedness Survey.
- Edward Ambinder, M.D., *Chair*, ASCO's *Internet Services Committee*, on information technology in the practice setting.

Make your hotel accommodations now by calling (831) 372-1234. Watch for meeting announcements and registration forms in July.

### *Additional Education Meetings*

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

June 19<sup>th</sup>

*ASCO Review*

International Oncology Network  
Southern California

June 25<sup>th</sup>

*Pancreatic Cancer 2004: Advances and Challenges*

University of California, San Francisco  
San Francisco

July 10<sup>th</sup>

*ASCO Review 2004*

National Oncology Alliance  
San Diego

August 28<sup>th</sup>

*Emerging Approaches to Breast & Colon Cancer Management*

National Oncology Alliance  
San Diego

September 25<sup>th</sup>

*New Advances in Supportive Care*

National Oncology Alliance  
San Francisco

October 9<sup>th</sup>

*Oncology Care Update*

San Francisco Bay Area Oncology Nursing Society

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

*Clinical Trials Workshop for the Community Oncology Team*

ASCO & Oncology Nursing Society  
Dallas

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

## 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](http://www.anco-online.org). It features the following:

- A weblog with important news for oncology practices posted on an almost daily basis.
- Links to affiliated organizations.

- A general description of the *Association* and its activities.
- ANCO's publications, advocacy information, and educational meeting announcements and materials.

ANCO urges its members to bookmark [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org) and refer to it often. Your suggestions are welcome and encouraged.

### **California Oncology Consortium (COC)**

The COC is a cooperative venture of ANCO and MOASC. The *Consortium* maintains a web site ([www.californiaoncology.org](http://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*. Finally, value-added services are also being offered to HOLN participants (e.g., professionally designed web sites for your medical practice at a substantially reduced price).

A complete current price list of HOLN contracted products is available from the ANCO office or online at [www.holn.org](http://www.holn.org).

## **ASSOCIATION NEWS**

### **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 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 14<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, MOASC, and the *University of California, San Francisco*, held a reception in honor of outgoing ASCO *President, Margaret A. Tempero, M.D.*, at the ASCO 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 100 California oncologists, sponsor representatives, and family members attended. ANCO thanks Alan Venook, M.D., and Pamela Gonzales, for their help in organizing and all the sponsors for their help in supporting this worthwhile event.

Jorge A. Garcia, M.D., *University of California, San Francisco*, received at 2004 Clinical Research Career Development Award at the ASCO 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. His paper, *Prior Estrogen Therapy as a Predictor of Response to Subsequent Estramustine-Based Therapy in Androgen-Independent Prostate Cancer Patients*, was presented at the General Poster Session, Genitorurinary Cancer on Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>.

ANCO was among twenty-two (22) ASCO *State/Regional Affiliates* featured in the ASCO 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Exhibit Hall. State society staff were available to showcase their organizations, interact with members, and discuss the need, especially in today's ever-changing legislative and regulatory environment, for ASCO members to become engaged in issues affecting cancer care by joining their state societies.

*The ANCO Directory of Members & Membership Information 2004* will be published later this month. All members, nurse managers, practice managers, and Corporate Member representatives will receive copies. Additional copies will be available from the ANCO office upon request.

### **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* is no longer an ANCO Corporate Member.

### ***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](http://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/](http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/clinical_trials/bigc/)

UCSF's *Pancreatic Cancer 2004: Advances and Challenges* takes place in San Francisco on June 25-26<sup>th</sup>. 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](http://cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MMJ04008) for more information.

For additional information on **continuing medical education meetings being organized by our Institutional Members**, please visit [cancercenter.stanford.edu](http://cancercenter.stanford.edu), [www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/about/events/index.html](http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/about/events/index.html), and [cc.ucsf.edu/news/events.html](http://cc.ucsf.edu/news/events.html).

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

Members may still **enroll in ANCO's 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. Contact the ANCO office for additional information.

ANCO's **model practice statement to patients regarding DIMA** that, while generic and general in nature, advises patients that there may be changes in the way their illness is treated in the medical oncology practice due to DIMA is available in .pdf version for reproduction and distribution or a .txt version for editing from the ANCO office via e-mail at [jlgonzalez@aol.com](mailto:jlgonzalez@aol.com).

ANCO and *Novartis Oncology* are distributing copies (a choice of VHS videotape or DVD) of *Living with Breast Cancer*, a film produced by Alan Kramer, M.D., *ANCO Treasurer*, to each ANCO member practice. The film explores how adolescents cope when their mothers are diagnosed with breast cancer.