

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 routinely sent to physician member practices and corporate member contacts. The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on Friday, August 13th.

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.

**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

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.]

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

- *Senator Barbara Boxer* (D-CA) recently submitted a letter to CMS requesting the prompt release of ASP data. You can

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.

download and read the letter at www.asco.org/asco/downloads/sen_boxer_letter_to_mcclellan.pdf. Please take a moment to call or write the *Senator's* office and thank her for this action (visit boxer.senate.gov/contact).

- A *CPT Drug Infusion Workgroup* has issued recommendations that would change the reporting of antineoplastic and other drug administration services. Read a summary of the *Workgroup's* recommendations at www.asco.org/asco/downloads/summary_of_the_cpt_drug_infusion_workgroups_recommendations.pdf

The *American Medical Association* (AMA) is likely to send vignettes for comment as a result of the *Workgroup's* recommendations. Please be sure to respond immediately to the AMA's request should you be contacted.

CMS released the proposed 2005 Physician Fee Schedule on July 27th. It can be viewed at www.cms.hhs.gov/regulations/pfs/2005/1429p.asp. Of special interest to oncology are pages 164-178 and 366-387 for drug and practice expense reimbursement specifics, respectively.

The proposed fee schedule includes some critical information related to average sales price (ASP) of chemotherapy drugs. ASCO's initial analysis indicates that the proposed changes in payments for drugs and drug administration services will have a large adverse effect on Medicare payments to oncologists. It should be noted, however, that in a recent letter to *Congress* predating the release of the physician fee schedule, CMS referred to the impending ASPs as "hypothetical" and reminded *Congress* that actual 2005 payment rates will be based on third quarter data that has yet to be collected.

ASCO is analyzing this very complex rule and will provide tools to help practices determine its impact on individual practices in the very near future. ASCO has also released a public statement that conveys its concerns about disruptions to patient care that may result from these cuts (visit www.asco.org/asco/downloads/mma_special_alert_0727042online.pdf).

In the meantime, here is what can you do:

- Reach out to your *Members of Congress* to express concern that this incomplete list of "hypothetical" ASPs make it difficult to plan for 2005.
- Prepare a list of the J-codes and the number of units that you have billed for each of these codes in the last six months. ANCO (via ASCO) will send you a spreadsheet with preliminary payment amounts into which you will be able to input your list of codes to calculate the estimated impact on your individual practice.

The **ASCO Clinical Practice Committee** teleconferenced on July 29th and discussed the proposed 2005 *Physician Fee Schedule* (or Rule), as follows:

- the Rule estimates an overall decline of 8% in drug revenue to oncologists, but ASCO believes the reduction to be much greater.
- the Rule briefly discusses possible changes in drug administration coding, but CMS is waiting for the *AMA CPT Editorial Panel* to act before making a final decision on possible coding changes. ASCO continues to work with the AMA on new/revised codes.
- ASCO's consultant (*Muse Associates*) is conducting an aggregate national analysis as well as selected targeted analyses of individual practices of the impact of the Rule with a goal of having these results in the short term.
- ASCO is distributing a spreadsheet (available at www.anco-online.org) for use by practices to analyze the impact of the Rule. In return, ASCO requests that these analyses be shared confidentially with them for aggregation of data, quality control, and validation of its model. ASCO will work with *Congress* to address some of the issues in the Rule but *Congress* is looking for some real numbers on the impact of the Rule and ASCO needs you to supply those numbers.

- Members should contact their local *Congressional Representatives* during the recess to explain the impact (from the data analysis) of the Rule on their local practice.
- ASCO plans on commenting and will provide information to members on how to comment on the Rule. They should also comment on the Rule directly to CMS and send copies of the comments to their *Representatives* and the *Congressional* leadership
- Finally, share the Rule's impact with the local media and share any resulting stories with ASCO.

On July 16-17th, the *Carrier Advisory Committee (CAC) Network* held its annual meeting, cosponsored by ASCO, the *American Society of Hematology*, and the *Society of Gynecologic Oncology*. The CAC is made up of specialty advisors who review local medical policies for Medicare carriers to assure their appropriateness. John A. Keech, Jr., D.O., *Board Member*, and José Luis González, *Executive Director*, represented ANCO. This year's meeting focused on:

- off-label coverage policies;
- least costly alternative policies;
- the CAC decision process;
- clinical trials coverage; and,
- bone marrow transplant policies.

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.]

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*. ANCO urges its members to contact their *State Assemblymembers* in support of SJR25.

ANCO is cooperating with CMA in its survey of physician practice costs. The survey process has been extended through August 31st. As an incentive, all participants will be entered in a drawing to win a free iPAQ pocket computer. You can participate in the survey by visiting www.calphys.org/html/bb609.asp.

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 10-11th at the Sacramento Convention Center/Sheraton Grand Hotel. The early registration deadline is August 16th and ANCO members are eligible for discounted registration. Visit www.cmanet.org and select "Conferences, Meetings, and Seminars" for additional information.

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 available online at www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider_news/ca-mbr/04-2.pdf.

Visit www.medicarenhic.com/whats_new/whats_new.shtml to learn the **latest information from NHIC/Medicare**. Of particular importance to oncology are the following recent updates:

- A new process for providers to correct minor errors and omissions on claims without pursuing the formal appeals process.
- Instructions for providing supervisor's information when a service incident to the ordering physician is supervised by another physician in the group.

The most recent ***NHIC/Medicare Carrier Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting*** took place in Oakland on July 21st. Among the topics discussed at the meeting were:

- NHIC/Medicare will be adding **darbepoetin** to the existing erythropoetin policy and will cover darbepoetin for all of the indications in

the erythropoietin policy. The effective date of the combined policy will be August 15th.

In addition, ANCO and NHIC/Medicare have agreed that **pemetrexed** shall be covered for non-small cell lung cancer.

The next *NHIC/Medicare Advisory Forum* (MAF) teleconference takes place on September 14th; the next *NHIC/Medicare Carrier Advisory Committee* (CAC) meeting takes place in Los Angeles in October; 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.]

Novel Therapies for Multiple Myeloma: Frontline Approaches 2004

On Thursday evening, August 12th, Brian G. M. Durie, M.D., *Cedars-Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Center*, will discuss advances in the treatment of multiple myeloma. This meeting will take place at the Hotel Sofitel in Redwood City.

Millennium is sponsoring these meetings. Meeting announcements were mailed in mid July.

Best of ASCO

Best of ASCO has been expanded this year to offer two meetings—one in Denver, Colorado, and one in Boston, Massachusetts. *Best of ASCO*, which debuted in 2003, is designed to bring highlights of the *ASCO Annual Meeting* to the local level. These regionally based events provide oncologists with access to cutting-edge, practice-changing research in a responsible, peer-reviewed manner. More than 20 of the top 46 abstracts from the *ASCO Annual Meeting* will be presented or discussed in the context of clinical practice by experts in their fields. The top

abstracts were selected by ASCO leaders, and the subset of abstracts to be included in the educational program at each *Best of ASCO* meeting is determined by a planning committee composed of ASCO leaders and ASCO *State/Regional Affiliate* representatives. *Best of ASCO* is targeted primarily to oncologists who were unable to attend the *ASCO Annual Meeting*. *Best of ASCO* in Denver will be held on August 27-28th, with an early registration deadline of Monday, August 2nd.

ASCO Practice Management Curriculum

ASCO is pleased to announce a unique educational initiative designed for practicing oncologists and their practice and nurse managers that will provide you with information that is critical to the future of your practice, including:

- Adapting to changes in Medicare;
- Generating practice efficiencies; and,
- Organizing for service expansion.

This course will be offered in conjunction with *Best of ASCO* in Denver on Saturday, August 29th. To register,

please e-mail mussonk@asco.org or call (703) 519-1413 by Monday, August 2nd.

ASCO Highlights 2004

On Tuesday evening, September 14th, 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*
- **Gastrointestinal Cancers**
George A. Fisher, M.D., *Stanford*
- **Genitourinary Cancers**
Primo Lara, Jr., M.D., *UC Davis*

ANCO thanks

AMGEN, AstraZeneca, Aventis, biogenIDEc,
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology,
Cell Therapeutics, Eli Lilly and Company,
Genentech BioOncology, Genitope Corporation,
Genomic Health, Genta, IMPAC,
International Oncology Network, MGI Pharma,
Millennium, Novartis Oncology, Ortho Biotech,
OSI Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer Oncology,
&
SuperGen

for supporting clinical and professional education.

- **Breast Cancer**

Hope Rugo, M.D., *UC San Francisco*

- **Lung Cancer**

Heather Wakelee, M.D., *Stanford*

ASCO Highlights 2004 is accredited by ASCO for 3 CEUs. Meeting announcements and registration forms were mailed in mid June.

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 techniques and information technology to meet the challenges faced by medical oncology practice in 2005 and beyond. The ANCO 2004 *Annual Meeting* is accredited by ASCO for 9 CEUs. The topic(s)/speaker(s) include:

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

Make your hotel accommodations now by calling (831) 372-1234. Watch for meeting announcements and registration forms in the first week of August.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

October 9th

Oncology Care Update

San Francisco Bay Area Oncology Nursing Society

October 15-17th

Clinical Trials Workshop for the Community

Oncology Team

ASCO & Oncology Nursing Society
Dallas

October 18-20th

2004 Fall Conference

California Hospice Foundation
Las Vegas, NV

October 20-24th

New Frontiers in Lymphedema Research and Therapy

National Lymphedema Network
Sparks/Reno, NV

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**. 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 advocacy information, educational meeting announcements and materials, and other publications.

ANCO urges its members to bookmark 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); has a ListServ for the exchange of general/administrative and clinical information; and, has a group purchasing organization (GPO).

Group Purchasing Organization. The COC GPO has preferred vendor agreements and discounted pricing with *International Oncology Network* (ION) and *Oncology Supply* (OS), and with *National Oncology Alliance* (NOA) and *Oncology Therapeutics Network* (OTN) for oncology pharmaceuticals and a wide-range of value-added services.

On Friday, August 20th, through Sunday, August 22nd, ION is sponsoring a *Northern California Protocol Retreat* for ANCO physician members at the Ritz Carlton Half Moon Bay. In addition to clinical discussions of lung, colorectal, and breast cancers, a legislative and reimbursement update will be presented. For additional information (an agenda and registration form) contact the ANCO office.

NOA is organizing several forthcoming clinical and professional education meetings, as follows:

- *Emerging Approaches to Breast and Colon Cancer Management*, August 28th, San Diego, an ONS-accredited program, highlights new advances in the management of colon and metastatic breast cancers.
- *New Advances in Supportive Care*, September 25th, San Francisco, a half-day ONS-accredited program on supportive care issues of interest to the oncology nursing professional including management of nausea and vomiting, anemia, chemotherapy-induced neutropenia; the role of bisphosphonates in the management of cancer patients; and, special considerations in the management of elderly patients.
- *Fall Conference 2004*, October 9th, Santa Monica, will explore the issues faced by community based oncology practices in the coming years, and equip

attendees with practical, clinical tools and reimbursement strategies that can be implemented in their own practice.

NOA also provides its members general HIPAA compliance support via its *HIPAA Compliance Toolkit* that addresses a practice's need to meet complicated, intricate HIPAA compliance rules and regulations. The *Toolkit* includes a set of draft policies and procedures, templates for forms and letters, a HIPAA training section, and a CD-ROM containing custom-ready forms. NOA recently added a chapter on *Research and the Privacy Rule*. A forthcoming chapter will address the *HIPAA Security Rule*. To request a free *HIPAA Compliance Toolkit*, please contact your NOA member services representative at (866) 466-2462 or send e-mail to hipaa@noainc.com

Hematology Oncology Leadership Network (HOLN)

HOLN is a network of state oncology and oncology manager societies. 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*. **A complete current price list of HOLN contracted products** is available from the ANCO office or online at www.holn.org. **HOLN recently announced contract (i.e., product, rebate, and/or pricing) changes** for *Sicor Oncology* products, including carboplatin, fludarabine, and vinorelbine.

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 August 5th. 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 2004 was published and mailed to all physician members, nurse and office manager contacts, and Corporate Member representatives on June 30th. Additional copies are available from the ANCO office upon request.

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

ALPHABETICAL DIRECTORY OF PHYSICIAN MEMBERS

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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 • 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. *Aventis* and *IMPATH* are no longer ANCO Corporate Members.

AstraZeneca is pleased to announce that Faslodex has been granted a reimbursement change by CMS effective July 1st. Faslodex is indicated for the treatment of hormone receptor-positive metastatic breast cancer in postmenopausal women with disease progression following antiestrogen therapy. CMS has directed Medicare Carriers to use the AWP listed for Faslodex by *First Data Bank* on April 1st, 2003 instead of the *Red Book* AWP listing on April 1st 2003. Contact NHIC/Medicare for guidance on how to submit supplemental claims for reimbursement based on the new price or contact the *AstraZeneca Cancer Support Network* at (866) 992-9276.

Eli Lilly and Company is pleased to announce FDA approval for Gemzar, in combination with Taxol, as first-line treatment for metastatic breast cancer. Based on an analysis of phase III data, this is Gemzar's third indication.

Eli Lilly and Company is pleased to announce that Alimta has been assigned code C9213 for hospital outpatient centers effective July 1st. Medicare Part A will pay for all claims retroactive to Alimta's FDA approval date of February 5th, 2004.

AstraZeneca and Ligand Pharmaceuticals have informed ANCO that their products (Arimidex, Iressa, and Nolvadex; and, Targretin, respectively) are listed as eligible for coverage under a *Medicare Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003* demonstration project for 2004 and 2005. For information about transitional coverage for these drugs, contact AstraZeneca at (866) 992-9276 or Ligand at (877) 654-4263.

events/index.html, www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/about/events/index.html, and cc.ucsf.edu/news/events.html.

Institutional Member News

ANCO initiated an institutional membership in 2002. 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 **2nd Annual Pan Pacific Lung Cancer** meeting takes place in Hong Kong on November 6-8th. The course chairs are David M. Jablons, M.D., and Tony Mok, M.D. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MMJ05003 for more information.

The **6th Annual UCD/UCSF Thoracic Oncology Conference** takes place in San Francisco on November 13th. The course chairs are David M. Jablons, M.D., and David Gandara, M.D.. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MSU05004 for more information.

For additional information on **continuing medical education meetings being organized by our Institutional Members**, please visit cancer.stanfordhospital.com/newsEvents/