

# ANCO FAX News

*Association of Northern California Oncologists*  
*Post Office Box 151109, San Rafael, California 94915-1109*  
*Voice: (415) 472-3960 • FAX: (415) 472-3961*  
*ExecDir@anco-online.org • www.anco-online.org*

Vol. 3, No. 16

August 13<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, August 27<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 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)*:

- CMS released the proposed 2005 *Medicare Physician Fee Schedule* on July 27<sup>th</sup>. It can be viewed at

**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.

[www.cms.hhs.gov/regulations/pfs/2005/1429p.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/regulations/pfs/2005/1429p.asp) (with pp. 164-178, 366-387 discussing drug and practice expense reimbursement, respectively).

- ASCO's spreadsheet tool and guide are available at [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org). Run your numbers, report your data to ASCO, and contact your *Senators* and *Congressional Representatives*. Tell them how the proposed 2005 *Medicare Physician Fee Schedule* and ASPs will impact your practice and patients using the results of your analysis and ASCO's talking points (available at [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org)). ASCO has also prepared a series of communication tools to educate key decision-makers about the impact of changes in Medicare for cancer care. Contact ASCO's *Public Policy & Clinical Affairs Department* at (703) 299-1050 or at [publicpolicy@asco.org](mailto:publicpolicy@asco.org) to request your information kit.

- ASCO commenced its meetings with CMS on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

- 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](http://www.asco.org/asco/downloads/summary_of_the_cpt_drug_infusion_workgroups_recommendations.pdf)

The *American Medical Association* (AMA) and ASCO will send out surveys as a result of the *Workgroup's* recommendations. Your timely participation in these surveys to assess the physician work associated with providing drug administration services for patients with cancer is very important. If you commit to completing these surveys, you will be asked to assess the physician work as defined by physician time, physician mental effort and judgment, and physician technical effort involved with the procedure or service. Because these surveys request specific input on physician effort, they must be completed by a physician. ASCO estimates that each survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. All surveys will be conducted electronically during

the last week of August. Since many oncologists may not have completed such surveys before, ASCO will hold conference calls during which the survey process will be explained. Please let ASCO know if you are interested in participating in this very important process by e-mailing Bela Sastry at [sastryb@asco.org](mailto:sastryb@asco.org) or calling her at (703) 299-1050.

### ***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 31<sup>st</sup>. You can participate in the survey by visiting [www.calphys.org/html/bb609.asp](http://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 10-11<sup>th</sup> at the Sacramento Convention Center/Sheraton Grand Hotel. The early registration deadline is August 16<sup>th</sup> and ANCO members are eligible for discounted registration. Visit [www.cmanet.org](http://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](http://www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider_news/ca-mbr/04-2.pdf).

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.

The most recent *NHIC/Medicare Carrier Advisory Committee* (CAC) meeting took place in Oakland on July 21<sup>st</sup>. 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 erythropoetin policy. The policy will be published August 15<sup>th</sup> and the effective date of the combined policy will be October 15<sup>th</sup>.

The next *NHIC/Medicare Advisory Forum* (MAF) teleconference takes place on September 14<sup>th</sup>; 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 12<sup>th</sup>, Brian G. M. Durie, M.D., *Cedars-Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Center*, discussed advances in the treatment of multiple myeloma before an audience of approximately 60 physicians, nurses, and others at the Hotel Sofitel in Redwood City. *Millennium* sponsored this meeting. A copy of Dr. Durie's presentation may be downloaded at [www.anco-online.org/education.html](http://www.anco-online.org/education.html).

### *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* 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 27-28<sup>th</sup>.

### *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 information that is critical to the future of medical oncology 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 29<sup>th</sup>. To register, please e-mail [mussonk@asco.org](mailto:mussonk@asco.org) or call (703) 519-1413.

### *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*
- **Gastrointestinal Cancers**  
George A. Fisher, M.D., *Stanford*
- **Genitourinary Cancers**  
Primo Lara, Jr., M.D., *UC Davis*
- **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 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 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. Meeting announcements and registration forms were mailed in early August.

### Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

September 10-12<sup>th</sup>

*Gastrointestinal Malignancy Program*  
International Oncology Network  
Boston

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

October 17-20<sup>th</sup>

*24<sup>th</sup> Annual Nurses Symposium*  
Scripps Cancer Center  
San Diego

October 28<sup>th</sup>

*Practice Performance: Maintaining the Health of Your Patients and Your*

#### ANCO thanks

AMGEN, AstraZeneca, Aventis, biogenIDEC,  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology,  
Cell Therapeutics, Eli Lilly and Company,  
Genentech BioOncology, Genitope Corporation,  
Genomic Health, Genta, GlaxoSmithKline,  
IMPAC, International Oncology Network,  
MGI Pharma, Millennium,  
Myriad Genetics Laboratories, Novartis Oncology,  
Oncology Supply,  
Oncology Therapeutics Network,  
Ortho Biotech, OSI Pharmaceuticals,  
Pfizer Oncology, Pharmion,  
&  
Schering-Plough Oncology, SuperGen  
for supporting clinical and professional education.

*Practice*

Innovative Medical Communications  
San Francisco

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:

- 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.

In addition, a weblog archives important news for oncology practices posted on an almost daily basis. Among the items posted on [www.anco-online.org/news/index.html](http://www.anco-online.org/news/index.html) since the last edition of the *ANCO FAX News* are:

- 11167 Exceptions to Prescribing Schedule II Drugs
- ACCC Responds to ASPs
- CMS/Medicare Updates– Coverage of Self-Administered Anti-Cancer Agents, Incident To Services, Interest on Incorrect Payments, Overcharging for Covered Services, SNFs
- Governor Signs Budget and Postpones DHS/MediCal Overhaul
- HIPAA Tip: Properly Disposing of Electronic Health Information
- National Marrow Donor Program Announces a Live CME Audioconference
- NHIC/Medicare 2005 Medicare Participation Enrollment & Fee Schedule
- NHIC/Medicare Website Updates
- UC Davis Cancer Center(an ANCO Institutional Member)– Ranked First in Clinical Trials Enrollment, Public Private Partnership Program

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).

**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 20<sup>th</sup>, through Sunday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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, including:**

- *Emerging Approaches to Breast and Colon Cancer Management*, August 28<sup>th</sup>, San Diego, an ONS-accredited program, highlights new advances in the management of colon and metastatic breast cancers.

### *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](http://www.holn.org). **HOLN recently announced contract (i.e., product, rebate, and/or pricing) changes for Aventis, Sicor, and Novartis contracts.**

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### *Letter from the ANCO President*

[CMS has published] proposed ASP pricing data...based on first quarter 2004 data supplied by pharmaceutical manufacturers. The actual ASP+6% reimbursement rates that take effect January 1, 2005 will be based on third quarter data, but the publication [of] the *Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule* gives us a first glance at the likely numbers. ASCO had strongly advocated *Congress* and CMS for this preliminary look at the numbers in the belief that the numbers would substantiate our fears on the detrimental impact of MMA on patient care. Only 20 of the 32 drugs for which data was released are commonly used by oncologists, and the list is lacking on newer agents or those off patent protection (multi-sourced), but it is what we have to work with. In my telephone conferences with oncologists around the country, some oncologists have commented that there is a large variation among drugs on the list in terms of the difference between ASP+6% and an individual oncology practice's actual drug purchase cost. Since CMS will not release the actual ASP data supplied to it by pharmaceutical companies, nor the methodology if any used to account for differences in discounting for volume purchasers, prompt payments, or other incentive programs, detection of anomalies in the pricing list may provide arguments against the implementation of ASP+6% on the grounds that the data is not reliable. ASCO's strategy is to argue for *Congressional* action to freeze both oncology drug reimbursements and the 32% transitional increase in chemotherapy administration codes at 2004 levels for the next 2 years (through 2006).

It is therefore quite important for ANCO members to run the numbers on those 20 drugs where ASP+6% data is now provided by CMS and find out on how many of those drugs practices will be under water. A spreadsheet to facilitate this analysis by your practice managers is available from [www.anco-online.org](http://www.anco-online.org) ... This is a call to arms. Please run your numbers in the spreadsheet, share this data with ASCO, and write *Senators* Boxer and Feinstein, and your

*Congressional Representatives* with examples of those drugs where your acquisition costs exceeds the ASP+6% reimbursement.

### *Board of Directors*

The ANCO *Board of Directors* teleconferenced on August 5<sup>th</sup>. Among the issues discussed and/or acted upon were:

- National and California legislative/regulatory issues, including the proposed 2005 *Medicare Physician Fee Schedule*, its impact, and how to encourage members to analyze and submit their data to ASCO; CMA's support of ANCO's position vis-à-vis the proposed fee schedule and additional ANCO representation on CMA *Councils* and *Committees*; the status of the *California Cancer Political Action Committee*; and, public and private payer issue updates.
- *ASCO Highlights 2004* and the *Annual Meeting*.
- The progress of ANCO's *DIMA Practice Preparedness Survey*.

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 meeting** will take place on September 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.

### *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  
 Genitope Corporation • 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-Plough Oncology • SuperGen  
 US Oncology • Wyeth Oncology

We especially wish to thank and welcome *Genitope Corporation, Genomic Health, Genta, Lash Group Healthcare Consultants, OSI Pharmaceuticals, and Schering-Plough Oncology* as new Corporate Members in 2004. *Aventis* and *IMPATH* are no longer ANCO Corporate Members.

*Eli Lilly and Company* submitted ASP plus 6% data to CMS for the second quarter for Alimta (500mg; \$2027.05) and Gemzar (200mg; \$115.33). This number is indicative of potential Medicare reimbursement. Actual Medicare reimbursement may vary.

### ***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](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/) where you can download ANCO's patient education brochure on SB37, California's law requiring the coverage of routine care costs for patients enrolled in clinical trials.

Stanford's 9<sup>th</sup> *Biennial National Symposium on Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation* takes place at Stanford on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The presenter is Robert S. Negrin, M.D. Visit [med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=2431](http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=2431) for more information.

Stanford's *Anal Cancer: Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment* takes place at Stanford on October 28<sup>th</sup>. The presenter is Mark L. Welton, M.D. Visit [med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=2415](http://med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=2415) for more information.

UCSF's 2<sup>nd</sup> *Annual Pan Pacific Lung Cancer* meeting takes place in Hong Kong on November 6-8<sup>th</sup>. The course chairs are David M. Jablons, M.D., and Tony Mok, M.D. Visit [cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MMJ05003](http://cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MMJ05003) for more information.

The 6<sup>th</sup> *Annual UCD/UCSF Thoracic Oncology Conference* takes place in San Francisco on November 13<sup>th</sup>. The course chairs are David M. Jablons, M.D., and David Gandara, M.D.. Visit [cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MSU05004](http://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/events/index.html](http://cancer.stanfordhospital.com/newsEvents/events/index.html), [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).