

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 sent to physician member practices and corporate member contacts. The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on Friday, September 24th.

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 is the latest with regard to the *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003* (MMA):

- the *Clinical Practice Committee* (CPC) and *State/Regional Affiliates* teleconferenced on September 2nd and

**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.

discussed the need for additional revenue surveys and the results of the AMA's *CPT Editorial Panel* meeting.

- ASCO held a briefing on *Capitol Hill* on September 8th for *Congressional* staff and the media on the effects the MMA will have on cancer care in 2005. At the briefing, ASCO presented results from two studies in order to provide legislators, regulators, the media, and others with the clearest picture possible of the impact of the proposed cuts in Medicare reimbursements for cancer care. The *Muse & Associates Study* projects a 43 percent loss in resources for chemotherapy services nationwide in 2005. These include services related to drug therapy and its side effects, as well as nutritional counseling, psychosocial assistance, family and grief counseling, and a host of other services to help patients cope with the devastating effects of cancer. The *ASCO Member Survey* suggests even more serious reductions in funds for chemotherapy services. Drug pricing data provided by oncology practices suggest the reductions in drug payments will average 15 percent, rather than the 8 percent suggested by CMS. At the average 15 percent reduction rate, reductions in drug payments will yield a 54 percent loss in funds available for chemotherapy services. Full results of these studies are available at www.anco-online.org.

- ASCO's spreadsheet tool, guide, talking points, and study results are available at www.anco-online.org. Run your numbers, report your data to ASCO, and use this information to tell your *Senators* and *Congressional Representatives* how ASPs will impact patient access to care at your practice. Preliminary results indicate that a number of drugs will be reimbursed below physician cost; the net effect on revenues is much larger than CMS's projection; and, there is wide variation in the proposed fee schedule's impact from practice to practice. Results will be

reported to the membership in the near future.

- The AMA's *CPT Editorial Panel* met in late August to consider several new drug administration codes. The results are posted on the AMA website at www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/362/panelactionsdruginfu.doc and are accessible via www.asco.org/mma (for September 2nd). The *Panel* approved new and revised codes for drug administration, including the addition of more complex codes for therapeutic drugs, but rejected codes for severe drug reaction management, treatment planning (but they established a *Work Group* to study this issue further), and physician pharmaceutical preparation. ASCO will seek to obtain temporary codes from CMS for these services.

Visit www.asco.org/mma or call ASCO's billing and coding hotline at (703) 299-1054 for up-to-date information on changes in coding for drug administration services, as well as billing and payments for drugs.

CMA, MOASC, and State Legislative/Regulatory Issues

[Editor's Note: ANCO and the *Medical Oncology Association of Southern California* (MOASC) are members of the *California Medical Association's* (CMA) *House of Delegates* and *Council on Legislation*. ANCO and MOASC 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 and the CMA supported the passage of SB1569 (Dunn; Private Right of Action) and call on all members to urge the Governor's signature of this important legislation.

SB1569 (Dunn) is a CMA-sponsored bill that clarifies and strengthens a physician's existing right to go to court to get paid properly by health care service plans. The bill passed both houses of the *Legislature* and is now on the *Governor's* desk. Lobbyists for the health plans are working hard to persuade the *Governor* to veto this bill. Please contact *Governor Schwarzenegger* and ask him to sign SB1569 (Dunn) before September 15th. For more information, and a sample letter, visit www.anco-online.org/news for September 1st.

ANCO has joined other specialty societies and the CMA in supporting the campaign to affirm the *Health Insurance Act* (SB2; Prop 72) and oppose attempts to repeal this law on the November 2004 ballot. ANCO endorses the *California Stem Cell Research & Cures Initiative* (Prop 71) on November's ballot and encourages all its members to support this campaign. This initiative will authorize low-interest, tax-free bonds to fund stem cell research in California. 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.

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* (September 2004) is available online at www.medicarenhic.com/providers/news/mbr_sept04.pdf.

Among the items most relevant to oncologists are:

- Bexxar Coverage and Coding
- October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Payment for Chemotherapy Administration Services, Nonchemotherapy Drug Infusion Services, and Drug Injection Services
- New LCD (04-06.01, effective 10/15/2004) for Erythropoietin Analogs
- Payment Limits for J7308 (Levulan Kerastick) and J9395 (Faslodex)
- Instructions for Providing Supervisor's Information When a Service Incident-To the Ordering Physician is Supervised by Another Physician in the Group
- Nurse Practitioners as Attending Physicians
- Medicare Replacement Drug Demonstration
- Skilled Nursing Facility Consolidated Billing: Erythropoietin (EPO), Epoetin

Alfa) and Darbepoetin Alfa (Aranesp);
Services Furnished Under Arrangement
With an Outside Entity

Visit www.medicarenhic.com/whats_new/whats_new.shtml to learn the latest information (updated weekly) from NHIC/Medicare.

According to a recent *EDS/MediCal Update* (August 2004), Femara and Zometa have been added to the MediCal formulary effective September 1st. Previously, Femara was not on the MediCal formulary and available only with a TAR. MediCal patients can now receive Zometa through participating MediCal pharmacies.

EDUCATION

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

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**
Steven E. Coutre, M.D., *Stanford*
- **Gastrointestinal Cancers**
George A. Fisher, M.D., Ph.D., *Stanford*
- **Genitourinary Cancers**
Primo N. Lara, Jr., M.D., *UC Davis*
- **Breast Cancer**
Hope S. 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 *Clinical Practice Committee*, on national legislative/ regulatory issues.
- Senator Deborah Ortiz, *Chair*, *California State Senate Health Committee*, & a CMA representative, on California legislative/regulatory issues.
- Joseph S. Bailes, M.D., Peter D. Eisenberg, M.D., Gerald N. Rogan, M.D., Joseph V. Simone, M.D., and Kirk Stapleton, 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.

Meeting announcements and registration forms were mailed in early August. Make your hotel accommodations now by calling (831) 372-1234 and return your registration forms to the ANCO office via FAX at (415) 472-3961.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

October 9th
Oncology Care Update

San Francisco Bay Area Oncology Nursing Society
South San Francisco

October 17-20th
24th Annual Nurses Symposium
Scripps Cancer Center
San Diego

October 28th
Practice Performance: Maintaining the Health of Your Patients and Your Practice
Innovative Medical Communications
San Francisco

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

ANCO thanks

AMGEN, APP/Abraxis Oncology, AstraZeneca, Aventis, Berlex Laboratories, biogenIDEC, Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology, Cell Therapeutics, Eli Lilly and Company, Genentech BioOncology, Genitope Corporation, Genomic Health, Genta, GlaxoSmithKline, IMPAC, IMPATH, International Oncology Network, MGI Pharma, Millennium, Myriad Genetics Laboratories, National Oncology Alliance, Novartis Oncology, Oncology Supply, Oncology Therapeutics Network, Ortho Biotech, OSI Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer Oncology, Pharmion, Roche Oncology, Sanofi-Synthelabo, Schering-Plough Oncology, SuperGen, & Wyeth 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. It features the following:

- Links to affiliated organizations and updated physician, nurse, manager, and patient resources.
- 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 additional news items posted on www.anco-online.org/news/index.html since the last edition of the *ANCO FAX News* are:

- ACCC News—
Medicare Drug Demonstration Project
Oncology Practices Brace for ASP
- ASCO's e-News, MMA Special Alert,
and *MMA Today*
- CMA News—
CIGNA Settlement Update
Emergency Bill Authorizes Agency to
Print More Triplicates
Survey: How Do You Feel About
DHS/MediCal
- CMS/Medicare Updates—
CCI Edits
HIPAA
Incident To Services
Rituximab
SNFs
- NHIC/Medicare Website Updates

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.

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

- *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.

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 changes (i.e., product, rebate, and/or pricing)** for *Mayne* and *Sicor* contracts.

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 meeting** will take place on September 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 2004 was published and mailed to all physician members; nurse and office manager contacts; and, Corporate

Member representatives last June. 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
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.

Genentech BioOncology reports that CMS has published *Change Request #3419* which details an increase in the 2004 Medicare physician office reimbursement rate for Rituxan (J9310) from 81% to 83% of AWP (or \$438.38), retroactive to April 1st, 2004. Providers must resubmit claims dating back to April 1 to receive a retroactive adjustment in Medicare payments for Rituxan. (Please note that the same *Change Request* lowers reimbursement for carboplatin from 88 to 86% of AWP, or \$135.15.)

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. Learn more about this project at 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.

UC Davis is pleased to issue a call for posters and papers for their *10th Annual Cancer Research Symposium* which will be marked by a keynote speech by Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach, *Director, National Cancer Institute*. Send your abstract to cancer.center@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu

Stanford's *9th Biennial National Symposium on Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation* takes place at Stanford on September 30th. The presenter is Robert S. Negrin, M.D. For more information, visit med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=2431.

Stanford's *Anal Cancer: Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment* takes place at Stanford on October 28th. The presenter is Mark L. Welton, M.D. For more information, visit med.stanford.edu/seminars/details-documents.jsp?semid=2415.

UCD's *5th Annual Advances in Oncology: Updates from ASCO, AACR, and SWOG* meeting takes place in Sacramento on October 30th.

For additional information on continuing medical education meetings being organized

by our Institutional Members, please visit:

- med.stanford.edu/seminars/cme-all.jsp?qcme=on
- www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/Confrnce/Confrnce.htm
- www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date

Publications, Services, & Surveys

ANCO will be purchasing bulk copies of ASCO's *Practical Tips for the Practicing Oncologist* (3rd edition) for distribution to all member practices. There will be no need for individual member practices to purchase a copy of this book. *Practical Tips* answers the most commonly asked questions about coding, coverage, reimbursement, and regulatory issues for medical oncology services. Watch for your copy later this month.

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. Member practices and ANCO share the cost of the site visit. Contact the ANCO office for additional information. And, 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 for download from www.anco-online.org/advocacy.html.