

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

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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, December 3rd.

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):

- ASCO's analysis of the *Physician Fee Schedule*, FAQs on revised drug administration codes and the Medicare

**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.

Demonstration Project (a total of 8 pages), a crosswalk from 2004 CPT codes to 2005 temporary G-codes, and an estimate of 2005 drug allowables are available at www.anco-online.org/mma.html. An example of how to report chemotherapy using the new G-codes and the crosswalk from 2004's CPT to 2005's G-codes for drug administration are attached to this issue of the *News*.

- Members should analyze their practice economics in light of the new drug administration codes and forthcoming drug allowables and continue to report back to ASCO on their impact on patient access to cancer care in the community setting.

Visit www.asco.org/mma, www.anco-online.org/mma.html, 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.

EDUCATION

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

Meeting MMA's Challenges in 2005: Comprehensive Practice Management & Clinical Treatment Strategies

On Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, December 8th and 9th, in Sacramento and San Francisco, respectively, speakers from *National Oncology Alliance* will present three talks on how to meet MMA's challenges in 2005. These talks will focus on treatment guidelines and how clinical tools can help practices assess the clinical and economic implications of treatment decisions; on purchasing strategies to maximize pharmaceutical purchasing power; and, on how to comply with HIPAA's final security rule. These programs will take place at the Hyatt Regency, Sacramento, and Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco. *National Oncology Alliance*

and *Oncology Therapeutics Network* are sponsoring these meetings. A copy of the meeting announcement was mailed in early November.

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 general description of the *Association* and its activities.
- ANCO's advocacy information, educational meeting announcements and materials, publications, and WebLog.
- Links to affiliated organizations and updated physician, nurse, manager, and patient resources.

The WebLog archives important news for oncology practices posted on an almost daily basis. Among the additional news items posted at www.anco-online.org/news/

ANCO thanks
National Oncology Alliance
&
Oncology Therapeutics Network
for supporting professional education.

[index.html](http://www.anco-online.org/news/index.html) since the last edition of the *ANCO FAX News* are:

- ASCO's e-News, MMA Special Alerts, and MMA Today's
- CMA Updates (DMHC's Online Unfair Payment Practices Complaint Form; Medicare GPCI Plan; Managed Care Contracting Guide)
- CMS/Medicare Website Updates (including 2Q04 ASPs)
- NHIC/Medicare Website Updates

ANCO urges its members to bookmark www.anco-online.org/news/index.html (or subscribe to www.anco-online.org/news/rss.xml using your favorite news reader software; e.g., RssReader for Windows or NetNewsWire for Macintosh) 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.

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*.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Letter from the ANCO President

CMS recently announced a **Medicare Demonstration Project** that in effect will return some of the monies that were to be taken away from chemotherapy service payments in 2005 due to the implementation of ASP plus 6% and the simultaneous loss of most of the 32% transitional increase in chemotherapy administration codes that were in effect in 2004. CMS acknowledged that the reduction in oncology practice payments was going to exceed the amounts that CMS had reported to *Congress* when MMA was debated on *Capitol Hill*. Taken together with the earlier changes in G codes, CMS estimates that the

reduction in payments for chemotherapy services will decrease from \$500 million to \$200 million for 2005. This is a substantial improvement for oncologists, although the Medicare Demonstration Project is a one-year program only and will not be applicable to commercial payers.

The Medicare Demonstration Project will require oncologists to report new G codes that will grade patient symptoms of nausea, pain, and fatigue on the day of chemotherapy on what is essentially a four-point scale. Oncologists will be paid \$130 per day, and this payment will be made for every day chemotherapy is given by injection or infusion and the symptoms are reported. Thus multiple payments can be made for regimens in which chemotherapy is given over several days per cycle. It is believed that CMS has an interest in studying patient quality of life and the degree to which physician work is related to symptom management, and that this Medicare Demonstration Project is an attempt to see if such data can be collected.

As now understood, a physician, physician extender, or nurse incident to a physician service (i.e., the physician is on the premises when the assessment is made) can make the assessment on the day of chemotherapy administration. ASCO will clarify whether the assessment can be made on the days prior to the chemotherapy administration in the event that a practice usually has the physician see the patient in that manner. Physicians may continue to bill for E&M codes on the day of chemotherapy in addition to the new G codes.

These changes are good news for oncologists, but I caution that the Medicare Demonstration Project is for one year and that commercial carriers will not be participating. We will need to continue to lobby *Congress* and CMS in 2005. It will be critical for oncologists to measure the impact of MMA in the first quarter of 2005 and for ASCO to collect that data in order to formulate arguments to prepare for 2006.

Board of Directors

The ANCO Board of Directors met on November 11th and discussed and/or acted upon the following issues:

- National and California legislative/regulatory issues, including MMA, the status of the *California Cancer Political Action Committee*, and public and private payer issue updates.
- *San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium Highlights 2004* and *ASH Highlights 2004* plans.
- ANCO's *MMA Practice Preparedness Survey*.
- 2004 *Annual Election*, preliminary FY2004 financial report, and investments.

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 in January. Please call José Luis González, *ANCO Executive Director*, at (415) 472-3960 if you wish to participate in a future meeting.

Individual Member News

ASCO recently nominated **John A. Keech, Jr.**, D.O., ANCO *Board Member* and *Past President*, to the *Medicare Coverage Advisory Committee* (MCAC).

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

Tim Crowley, M.D.

California Cancer Care
1350 South Eliseo Drive, Suite 200
Greenbrae, CA 94904-2007
Contact(s): Harvey Bickhoff
Lorraine Holzapfel

Dana Monroe, R.N.
Daina Vitols
Cathy Yatabe
Telephone: (415) 925-5000
FAX: (415) 925-5050

Bimal J. Patel, M.D.

East Bay Medical Oncology-Hematology
Associates
13847 East 14th Street, Suite 217
San Leandro, CA 94578
Contact(s): Alice Barlettani, R.N.
Diane Naujok
Sharon Williams
Telephone: (510) 483-2555
FAX: (510) 483-1856
bjponc@mac.com

Kota Shekar, M.D.

Post Office Box 2068
Merced, CA 95344-0068
Telephone: (209) 722-5100
FAX: (209) 722-5200

ALPHABETICAL DIRECTORY OF NURSE & OFFICE MANAGER CONTACTS

Brad Duke

East Bay Medical Oncology-Hematology
Associates
2700 Grant Street, Suite 106
Concord, CA 94520
Telephone: (925) 687-2570
FAX: (925) 687-2847
brad.duke@ebmoh.com

Dana Monroe, R.N.

California Cancer Care
1350 South Eliseo Drive, Suite 200
Greenbrae, CA 94904-2007
Telephone: (415) 925-5000
FAX: (415) 925-5050

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
Genentech BioOncology
Genitope Corporation • Genomic Health
Genta • GlaxoSmithKline
International Oncology Network
Lash Group Healthcare Consultants
Ligand Pharmaceuticals • Lilly Oncology
Matrix Oncology • 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, Matrix Oncology, OSI Pharmaceuticals, and Schering-Plough Oncology* as new Corporate Members in 2004 and 2005. *Aventis* and *IMPATH* are no longer ANCO Corporate Members as of 2004.

Cell Therapeutics recently informed ANCO that trisenox's projected 2005 Medicare payment rate (ASP plus 6%) will be \$3,329.89 per carton (or \$33.30/mg). The 3Q04 ASP calculation submitted to CMS is provided for information purposes only.

MedImmune Oncology recently informed ANCO that CMS adjusted the reimbursement rate for amifostine to \$422.21 per vial, effective April 1, 2004, through December 31, 2004. Please note that Medicare carriers will not automatically pay the difference on past claims, so offices should bring these claims to the attention of their carriers. In addition, *MedImmune Oncology* has launched a patient co-pay foundation.

Sanofi-Synthelabo recently informed ANCO that the FDA has approved eloxatin in combination with infusional 5-FU/LV, for the adjuvant

treatment of stage III colon cancer patients who have undergone complete resection of the primary tumor.

Institutional Member News

ANCO thanks the following **Institutional Members** for their support:

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

UCSF's **4th Annual Clinical Cancer Update** takes place in Lake Tahoe on January 14-16th, 2005. The course chairs are David M. Jablons, M.D., and Alan P. Venook, M.D. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MSU05005 for more information.

Publications, Services, & Surveys

Members may still enroll in ANCO's **MMA 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. A preliminary report of the **MMA Practice Preparedness Survey** and an **updated model practice statement to patients regarding MMA** are available at www.asco.org/mma.html.