

ANCO FAX News

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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 the week of December 20th.

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 *General Accounting Office* (GAO) released a report on December 1st looking at drug pricing and practice expense in

**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.

the oncology setting. The report concluded that approximately 15% of the drugs were not obtainable at the CMS price (i.e., ASP plus 6%). In addition, the GAO deferred to CMS with regard to the methodology used to calculate practice expense. In this respect, ASCO believes that the GAO report failed to meet the *Congressional* mandate.

- The 2005 Medicare *Physician Fee Schedule* posted by the Medicare carriers prior to November 19th may be incorrect. The correct fees can be found at www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/pufdownload/. The fees included in the CD-ROM as part of the 2005 annual participation enrollment mailing are correct and did reflect the fees in the final rule for the 2005 Medicare *Physician Fee Schedule*.
- ASCO's analysis of the *Physician Fee Schedule*, FAQs on revised drug administration codes and the Medicare Demonstration Project (a total of 8 pages, including an example of how to report chemotherapy using the new G-codes), 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. ASCO and CMS are working together to develop a template to document use of the Medicare Demonstration Project G-codes.
- CMS should be providing the Medicare payment rates for chemotherapy drugs for January 2005 by mid-December. In the coming weeks, ASCO will ask you to provide it with the prices that you are paying for drugs in order to provide CMS with real-world information on the effects of the new payment structure. Members should be prepared to analyze their practice economics in light of the new drug allowables now and report back to ASCO on their impact immediately upon release of the 3Q04 ASPs. ASCO will be asking you soon to again fill out a spreadsheet with your drugs prices and utilization data and will use that

information to identify problems with specific drugs and analyze the aggregate effect of the new policy.

- ASCO is developing an addendum to *Practical Tips for the Practicing Oncologist* that focuses on the 2005 coding and billing changes that will be available to the public in the near future.
- Audio conferences on the new drug administration and Medicare Demonstration Project G-codes are planned for mid December and early January (see the Education section, below).
- Member efforts to communicate with and educate your *Congressional Representatives* have been—and will continue to be—invaluable in providing the real-world perspective that is so necessary in creating a dialogue on *Capitol Hill*. Keep them informed of the impact of January 1st changes in financing cancer care on your practice, its employees, and your patients.
- ANCO is surveying its members on the anticipated impact of MMA starting January 1st. The survey was distributed via FAX on November 24th. If you have not submitted your replies, then please do so no later than December 17th. If you did not receive survey, then please request one from the ANCO office.

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.

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 2005 NHIC/Medicare *Physician Fee Schedule* is now posted on the NHIC website at www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/fee_sched.shtml. Drugs and biologicals are not listed, but that fee schedule should come out

sometime in December. NHIC/Medicare also sent the 2005 Medicare *Participation Enrollment and Fee Schedule* information on CD format. No Internet access is required to access the CD information. The CD also contained a survey, which NHIC encourages all recipients to complete and return to them. Finally, the 2005 Medicare *Physician Fee Schedule* posted by the Medicare carriers prior to November 19th may be incorrect. The correct fees can be found at www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/pufdownload/. The fees included in the CD-ROM as part of the 2005 annual participation enrollment mailing are correct and did reflect the fees in the final rule for the 2005 Medicare *Physician Fee Schedule*.

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.

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

ASCO Audio Conferences on Drug Administration & Medicare Demonstration Project G-codes

ASCO is planning two audio conferences on the use of the new drug administration and Medicare Demonstration Project G-codes. The first will take place on Thursday, December 16th at 1PM Pacific Time. The second will take place on Thursday, January 6th at 1PM Pacific. Details on how to access the calls will be provided in the very near future.

San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium Highlights 2004—Mark Your Calendar!

On Wednesday, January 26th, faculty from *UC San Francisco* (Laura J. Esserman, M.D., M.B.A., Catherine C. Park, M.D., Michelle E. Melisko, M.D., and John W. Park, M.D.) will review the most clinically relevant studies presented at this month's meeting in San Antonio. Hope S. Rugo, M.D., will moderate this meeting that will take place at a location to be announced in mid-December.

ASH Highlights 2004—Mark Your Calendar!

On Wednesday, February 9th, faculty from *Stanford University* (Steven E. Coutre, M.D., and Jason R. Gotlib, M.D., *UC Davis* (Joseph M. Tuscano, M.D., and Theodore Wun, M.D.), and *UC San Francisco* (Thomas G. Martin, III, M.D.) will review the most clinically relevant studies presented at this month's meeting in San Diego. This meeting will take place at a location to be announced in mid-December.

ASCO Highlights 2004 and ANCO's 2004 Annual Meeting

Did you miss ANCO's *ASCO Highlights 2004* program? A limited number of syllabuses are available from the ASCO office. The *PowerPoint* presentations may be downloaded from and an on-demand webcast of the program (or virtual

meeting) is now available at www.anco-online.org/asco.html.

Did you miss ANCO's 2004 *Annual Meeting*? A limited number of syllabuses are available from the ANCO office and *PowerPoint* presentations may be downloaded from www.anco-online.org/annmtg.html.

Other ANCO Meetings

Additional ANCO meetings (e.g., a colorectal cancer update, on myelodysplastic syndrome, on integrative oncology, and on physician/patient communication) are in the planning stages and will be announced as they are scheduled.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

Through December 10th

Advances in Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma Treatment: The Changing Role of Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation

National Marrow Donor Program, Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research, & Medical College of Wisconsin
ww4.premconf.com/web RSVP (Code: 553533).

January 20th-22nd, 2005

Stem Cell Transplantation in Children: Current Results and Controversies

Cincinnati Children's Hospital & duPont Hospital for Children
Scottsdale, AZ

January 27-29th, 2005

Cancer 2004: Preferred Treatment and Management Options

Hoag Cancer Center
Huntington Beach

February 26-27th, 2005

Essentials of Pain Medicine: What You Need to Know on the Front Line of Medicine
American Academy of Pain Medicine
Palm Springs

February 28th-March 2nd, 2005

2005 Spring Conference & Meeting
California Hospice Foundation
Berkeley

March 5th, 2005

4th Annual Alison Taylor Holbrooks Breast Cancer Conference

Alison Taylor Holbrooks Breast Cancer Research Fund (and others, including ANCO)
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**. 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/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
- CMS/Medicare Website Updates
- MGMA Medicare Update Teleconference Announcement
- 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* has a ListServ for the exchange of general/administrative and clinical information; and, has a group purchasing organization (GPO).

ListSers. The COC operates two e-mail based communications systems called ListSers. The COC-ADMIN ListServ is available to all ANCO and MOASC physician members, practice managers and nurses, and Corporate Member representatives. It is a source for the latest *Association* news, special bulletins, legislative reports, and other information impacting oncology practices. To post an item to the COC-ADMIN ListServ, send e-mail to COC-ADMIN@californiaoncology.org.

The COC-CLINICAL ListServ is open only to ANCO and MOASC physician members for the secure exchange of information and ideas between physicians. To post an item to the COC-CLINICAL ListServ, send e-mail to COC-CLINICAL@californiaoncology.org.

All members and their staffs are encouraged to subscribe, participate, and use these ListSers to communicate with colleagues about issues of importance to oncology practices by sending their e-mail addresses to the ANCO office.

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.

ION recently announced its 2005 meeting schedule. California and regional meetings include:

- Access to Care (Oakland; Jan. 19)
- Breast Symposium (San Diego; Feb. 11-13)
- West Coast Nursing Meeting (Las Vegas; Apr. 15-17)
- Lung Symposium (Las Vegas; Apr. 29-May 1)

- Business of Oncology (San Francisco; Jun. 24-26)

Access to Care/Late Breaking Medicare Reform Challenges: What Your Practice Needs to Know

will address the challenges presented by the implementation of MMA and faced by community-based practices in 2005. This meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 19th, at The Claremont Resort, Oakland, starting at 6:30PM. Additional information is available from ION or ANCO.

Additional ION meetings (ASH Review, Clinical Trials, Prostate Symposium, ASCO Review, GI Symposium) are planned throughout the year throughout the country.

NOA 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 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*. **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 *Sicor* contracts.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Annual Election

Four seats on the ANCO *Board of Directors* are up for election in 2004. This year's election is being conducted via mail ballot in December. **Annual election ballots are being mailed in early December** along with membership renewal notices.

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 in January. 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 • APPI/Abraxis Oncology
AstraZeneca • Aventis • 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. *IMPATH* is no longer ANCO Corporate Members as of 2004.

Aventis recently informed ANCO that the FDA has approved Taxotere in combination with prednisone for the treatment of patients with advanced metastatic prostate cancer and in combination with doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide (i.e., the TAC regimen) for the adjuvant treatment of patients with operable, node-positive breast cancer.

Genentech BioOncology recently informed ANCO that Avastin has been granted a permanent J-code effective January 1st (J9035, 10mg). In addition, the FDA recently approved Tarceva as a second- or third-round treatment for advanced non-small cell lung cancer.

Lilly Oncology has informed ANCO that it has submitted 3Q04 ASPs for Alimta (500mg; \$1912.31) and Gemzar (200mg; \$108.81). Actual Medicare reimbursement may vary.

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

For 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/Confrence/Confrence.htm

- www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date

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.

The *8th Annual Northern California Tumor Board at Silverado* will be presented by the *Stanford University School of Medicine* from March 11-13th, 2005. Tumor boards on breast, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, head and neck, and thoracic cancers; hematological malignancies and lymphoma; melanoma/sarcoma; and, supportive and palliative care will be presented by faculty from *Stanford*, *UC Davis*, and *UC San Francisco*, and the community. Registration and case submission materials can be obtained from ANCO or from Beverly Kelly at beverlyk@stanford.edu.

UCSF's *Advances in Urologic Oncology* takes place in San Francisco on March 18-19th, 2005. Visit www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MUR05001 for more information.

UCSF's *1st International Symposium on Cancer and the Lymphovascular System* takes place in San Francisco on April 28-30th, 2005. The course chair is Stanley P. L. Leong, M.D. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MSU05002 for more information.

UCSF's *Pain and End-of-Life Care* takes place in San Francisco on June 9-10th, 2005. This course is designed for all physicians, nurses, and pharmacists who care for patients in pain or with life-threatening illness. It meets California's requirement that physicians take 12 hours of CME in pain and palliative care. Visit www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=DMM05513 for more information.

UCD's online CME pain management courses are now available at www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/DistEd/WebEvents/PainEvents.htm. In

addition, UCD is offering several **live pain management courses** in California and Hawaii. Visit www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/Confrnce/Confrnce.htm for additional information. Finally, the AMA offers a 12-hour **online CME course in pain management** at www.ama-cmeonline.com.

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.

Membership Dues for 2005

Membership renewal notices for 2005, a membership benefits guide, and 2004 *Annual Report* are being mailed to all members in early December. Please renew your membership for 2005 as soon as possible. Be sure to take advantage of dues discounts and provide ANCO with the name(s) of an office and nurse manager contact(s). Those not renewing their membership by June 1st will be deleted from the *Directory of Members*, will no longer be eligible for participation in ANCO's discounted pharmaceutical pricing programs, or receive any other ANCO benefits. Contact the ANCO office if you do not receive or misplace your membership dues renewal notice.

ANCO seeks new members. **All members of a practice should join ANCO.** Provide the ANCO office with the names and addresses of colleagues you would like invited to join ANCO.

A larger ANCO is a stronger ANCO!