

ANCO FAX News

Association of Northern California Oncologists
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IN THIS ISSUE

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 Friday, February 27th.

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; jlgonzalez@aol.com.

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.]

Peter Paul Yu, M.D., *ANCO President*, and José Luis González, *ANCO Executive Director*, represented ANCO at the **ACCC Presidents Retreat** in Washington, D.C., on February 6-7th. Among the highlights were:

- Representatives from CMS and Congress said that the Medicare prescription drug bill would have minimal impact on oncology.

**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 a professional 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, 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 billing, contracting, and coding. The information contained in the *ANCO FAX News* should not be used as a substitute for such advice.

- ACCC's lobbyist said their successful advocacy for improvements in the hospital outpatient reimbursement system could be applied to the physician office setting.
- State society *Presidents* shared their local initiatives and concerns, including ANCO's initiative to explore ways of preventing private payers from inappropriately following the Medicare example.
- ACCC leadership announced that oncology has a six-month window of opportunity to influence CMS and/or Congress to make changes for 2005.

ASCO *Clinical Practice Committee* (CPC) comprised of over 40 community oncologists and 45 state society *Presidents*, met in Washington, D.C., on February 6th. John A. Keech, Jr., D.O., past *ANCO President*, is CPC *Chair*. Peter Paul Yu, M.D., *ANCO President*, and José Luis González, *ANCO Executive Director*, represented ANCO at this meeting. Among the highlights of this meeting were:

- The *American Medical Association* (AMA) and the oncology community disagreed over the AMA's support of the Medicare prescription drug bill; **the AMA supports ASCO's efforts to correct the legislation.**
- The ASCO *Health Services Committee* is developing new practice guidelines on the use of bisphosphonates and the treatment of non-resectable non-small lung cancer, and is updating existing practice guidelines on tumor markers and CSFs. ASCO is studying the use of its practice guidelines.
- The *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (JCO) invited and several volunteers were recruited to represent community oncology on its *Editorial Board*.
- The CPC unanimously endorsed a **legislative strategy for 2004** that would freeze current reimbursement for two additional years (i.e., through 2006) when the results of Congressionally mandated impact studies are due. ASCO will identify and recruit a

credible sponsor to introduce legislation accomplishing this goal. In the meantime, ASCO staff is ready, willing, and able to assist community oncologists communicate the impact of passed legislation on the practice of community oncology to their elected representatives; and continues to publicize its message in the media. (See the attached notice for three national conference calls.)

- A **State/Regional Affiliate Program** task force consisting of ASCO members and State/Regional Affiliate administrators is identifying ways to improve ASCO's services to the state oncology societies.
- ASCO submitted a letter to the *CPT Advisory Committee* requesting modification in the preamble language for CPT codes associated with drug administration. ASCO is asking that the preamble address chemotherapy management.
- **ASCO and the Assembly of Oncology/Hematology Administrators** are developing a common vocabulary for front office, nursing, and back office activities/services being performed in oncology practices. A subsequent study will evaluate the work/costs associated with these activities/services.

An article in the January 30th *New York Times* entitled ***Medicare Considers Curbs on Payment for Cancer Drugs*** stated that CMS is considering developing a policy under which Medicare reimbursement would be denied for off-label uses of certain cancer drugs. In response, ASCO sent a letter to CMS reminding it that ensuring coverage of off-label usage for chemotherapy drugs is an important part of cancer treatment and expressing concern about any changes to Medicare policy that would restrict coverage of cancer drugs used for off-label uses, and to the *New York Times* responding to the article's inaccuracies. Following ASCO's lead, *ANCO President* Peter Paul Yu, M.D., sent the following letter to the *New York Times*:

Although there are several errors in fact contained in this article, the underlying point raised by [the article's author] is the practice of expanding the disease indications for new drugs beyond the FDA approved indications. The development of medical ethics after WWII allows medical research for new drugs to be performed only on patients for whom all proven treatments have failed. New cancer treatments are approved by the FDA based on these studies, and the indications are narrowly defined as a result. Once drugs are available, physicians often find that these drugs are highly effective in all stages of these diseases. The ability of oncologists to use these medications as their collective experience and judgment dictates is vital for the best patient outcomes to be achieved. When the Medicare program was established in the 1960, Congress mandated that regional practice patterns be preserved to allow for flexibility in patient care. The off-label use of cancer drugs has been specifically protected by Congressional legislation since the 1990s. A new policy restricting oncologists' use of newer, more expensive treatments will result in inferior medical treatment, and is inconsistent with the goal of bringing the benefits of medical advances rapidly into clinical practice.

ANCO and ASCO have long been involved in ensuring coverage for off-label usage of chemotherapy drugs, having played an instrumental role in the development and passage of State and Federal law requiring

insurance carriers to cover off-label uses for drugs.

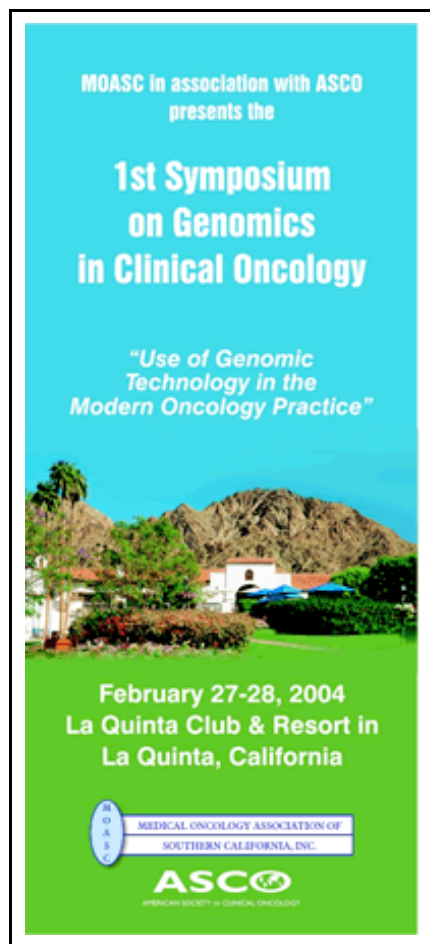
CMA, MOASC, and State Legislative/Regulatory Issues

[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.]

The CMA, with the support of ANCO and many other specialty societies, successfully advocated for the passage of SB151 (triplicate prescriptions; Burton). Under provisions of this new law, the triplicate prescription requirement for Schedule II controlled substances will be eliminated after July 1st, 2004 and will require prescribers of Schedule II controlled substances to meet the same prescription requirements imposed with respect to other prescribable controlled substances after January 1st, 2005.

ASCO and MOASC are organizing the 1st Annual Symposium on Genomics in Clinical Oncology in La Quinta on February 27-28th. David Botstein, Ph.D., Princeton University will receive the First Annual Sebastian George Memorial Award. Additional faculty include David B. Agus,

M.D., Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Darell Bigner, M.D., Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center, Paul Bunn, M.D., University of Colorado, Robert B. Diasio, M.D., University of Alabama, Brain J. Druker, M.D., Oregon Health and Science University, and Edith Perez, M.D., The Mayo Clinic. Registration forms are available from the ANCO office, and registration is now free to ANCO members.



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 2004 *Medicare Physician Fee Schedule* (including drug pricing) is now available at the NHIC/Medicare website (www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/fee_sched.shtml).

In response to changes in Medicare reimbursement for drug and practice expenses, Gerald N. Rogan, M.D., former *Carrier Medical Director* for NHIC/Medicare (and now a consultant) suggests the following:

- If you perform an E/M service that is separately identifiable, as well as reasonable and necessary on the same day that you provide a chemotherapy infusion service to the same patient, you may apply modifier -25 to the E/M code (99212-99215). An example would be for a patient who complains of new onset abdominal pain at the time of a scheduled chemotherapy infusion service, CPT codes 96400 through 96549.
- However, under the new reimbursement regulations, for services furnished on or after January 1st, Medicare will no longer allow payment for the lowest level established patient office visit, CPT code 99211, on the same day as a chemotherapy administration service, even when a -25 modifier is appended to the 99211. Payment for the chemotherapy infusion now includes the amount that previously was separately payable when reported with a 99211 E/M service.
- CMS now allows separate payment for each chemotherapy push on the same day, CPT code 96408, for services furnished on or after January 1st.

Effective April 1st, all claims for non-home services must contain the physician address (and, most importantly, the zip code) of the place where the service was rendered, even if the services were rendered in a physician office. Previously, this information was obtained from the provider's address information on file. Every

claim will now need to include this information on Line 32 of Form 1500 (or the electronic equivalent field).

EDUCATION

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

Medicare Reimbursement for Oncology 2004

On Tuesday through Thursday, January 27-29th, in Fresno, Sacramento, and San José, Roberta Buell, M.B.A., presented the latest information on the changes in Medicare reimbursement for oncology before a cumulative audience of approximately 200 physicians, nurses, practice managers, and others. The speaker described these changes as well as those planned for 2005, how to analyze their impact on your oncology practice, and possible responses to these impacts. Analytical tools were described and illustrated. Copies of distributed materials are available from the ANCO office. *Eli Lilly and Company* and *Ortho Biotech* sponsored these meetings.

Review of the American Society of Hematology (ASH) 2003 Annual Meeting

On Tuesday, March 23rd, Charles Linker, M.D., Tom Martin, M.D., and Willis Navarro, M.D., *UC San Francisco*, will review the most clinically relevant studies presented at last month's meeting in San Diego. This meeting will take place at The Claremont Resort, Oakland. *UC San Francisco* is accrediting this program for continuing education units. *biogenIDEA*, *Cell Therapeutics*, *Genentech BioOncology*, *Genta*, *Novartis Oncology*, and *Wyeth Oncology* are supporting this meeting. Announcements were mailed in mid February.

ANCO's Clinical Education Strategy

The ANCO *Education Committee* and *Board of Directors* formulated a clinical education strategy for the *Association* beginning in 2004, as follows:

First, ANCO has very successfully organized several **Review and Highlights programs** over the past several years. These have been our best attended, supported, and received programs to date. The ANCO *Education Committee* and *Board of Directors* would like to expand (i.e., add time, national faculty, locations, delivery systems) to our existing offerings (i.e., *San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium*, ASH, ASCO) and add additional Review and Highlights (e.g., lung) programs to our list of offerings.

Second, ANCO's members have called for and our new affiliation with the *California Medical Association* make it more important than ever that we organize and hold an **Annual**

Meeting. The ANCO *Education Committee* and *Board of Directors* have agreed that ANCO should organize an Annual Meeting starting in 2004. The Annual Meeting will take place over several days (i.e., a weekend) and feature clinical and professional sessions for physicians, nurses, and practice managers.

Third, in light of a need for additional nursing continuing education and the PhRMA and OIG guidelines, the ANCO *Education Committee* and *Board of Directors* have decided to seek **accreditation** for ANCO clinical education meetings. We are pursuing this via our Institutional Members (Stanford, UC Davis, UC San

Francisco), ASCO, and through IMQ/CMA.

Therefore, in order to move forward on this educational strategy, the ANCO *Education Committee* and *Board of Directors* will only consider proposals for single-sponsor, evening clinical education dinner meetings that feature the highest quality speakers (i.e., thought leaders) on the most important clinical topics.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

March 6th
Third Annual Conference: Breast Cancer—What's Really Going On?
 Allison Taylor Holbrooks Breast Cancer Research Fund
 San Francisco

March 28th-31st
2004 Administrators in Oncology-Hematology Assembly (AOHA) Conference
 Medical Group Management Association
 San Diego
 April 29th-May 2nd
29th Annual Congress—The Ride of

ANCO thanks

biogenIDEC, Cell Therapeutics,
 Eli Lilly and Company,
 Genentech BioOncology, Genta, ,
 Novartis Oncology, Ortho Biotech,
 &
 Wyeth Oncology

for supporting clinical and professional education.

Your Life!
 Oncology Nursing Society
 Anaheim

June 5-8th
40th Annual Meeting
 American Society of Clinical Oncology
 New Orleans, LA

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 information:

- A weblog with important news for oncology practices.
- Links to affiliated organizations.
- A general description of the *Association*.
- A description of ANCO membership benefits, publications, educational meeting announcements and materials.
- Advocacy information.

ANCO urges its members to bookmark www.anco-online.org and refer to it often. Your suggestions are encouraged and welcome.

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 recently announced contract (i.e., product, rebate, and/or pricing) changes for Navelbine, Prochlorperazine (Sicor), and Taxotere.

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 (as of February 2004) 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 and FFF/Innovatix products.

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 serve the membership. *Board* meetings are open to the membership. The next regularly scheduled ANCO *Board of Directors* meeting will take place on March 23rd. 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 2003 was published and mailed to all members in early June 2003. An updated edition will be published in June 2004. Additional copies are available from the ANCO office.

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

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Corporate & Institutional 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 • Aventis
Bayer Biologicals • Berlex Laboratories
biogenIDEC
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology
Cell Therapeutics • Chiron Corporation
Eli Lilly and Company
Genentech BioOncology • Genomic Health
Genta • Glaxo SmithKline • IMPATH
International Oncology Network
LashGroup/Documedics
Ligand Pharmaceuticals
MedImmune Oncology • MGI Pharma
Millennium • National Oncology Alliance
Novartis Oncology • Oncology Supply
Oncology Therapeutics Network
Oncotech • Ortho Biotech
Pfizer Oncology • Roche Oncology
Sanofi-Synthelabo
Schering Oncology/Biotech
SuperGen • US Oncology • Wyeth Oncology*

We especially wish to thank and welcome *Genomic Health, Genta, and Schering Oncology/Biotech* as new Corporate Members in 2004. Members are encouraged to provide the names of organizations that are not currently Corporate Members to the ANCO office.

Eli Lilly and Company received FDA approval for **Alimta** (pemetrexed; J9999, 500mg) for malignant pleural mesothelioma (in combination with cisplatin).

Genentech BioOncology is organizing a meeting with Larry Norton, M.D., on *The Evolving Role of HER2 in the Contemporary Management of Breast Cancer: New Therapeutic Strategies and Advances* on Thursday, March 11th at 6:30PM at Viognier in San Mateo. RSVP to George Romanowsky via

e-mail at roman@gene.com, telephone at (408) 887-9293, or FAX at (408) 929-7699.

Pfizer Oncology is working with CMS to address the issue of inadequate reimbursement for Camptosar and **has announced that it is reducing the price of Camptosar** by approximately 6.1% effective January 27th.

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*

The **6th Annual Northern California Tumor Board at Silverado** will be presented by the *Stanford University School of Medicine* from March 12-14th. Tumor boards on cancer genetics; breast, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and thoracic cancers; hematological malignancies and lymphoma; 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 (650) 736-1454 (beverlyk@stanford.edu).

Pain and End-of-Life Care takes place in San Francisco on June 10-11th. Presented by the *University of California, San Francisco*, this course is designed for all physicians, nurses, and pharmacists who care for patients in pain or with life-threatening illness. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=DMM04462 for more information.

Membership Dues for 2004

Second notices of membership renewal will be mailed in February 2004. Return your 2003 membership dues to ANCO at your earliest convenience. Those not renewing their membership by June 1st will be deleted from the *Directory of Members* and will no longer be eligible for participation in ANCO's discounted pharmaceutical pricing programs. Contact the ANCO office if you did not receive or have misplaced your membership dues renewal notice.