

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 • e-mail: jlgonzalez@aol.com
www.anco-online.org • www.californiaoncology.org

Vol. 3, No. 5

March 12th, 2004

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, March 26th.

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.]

An article in the March 11th edition of the *New York Times* entitled *Among Cancer Doctors, A Medicare Revolt* describes the oncology community's response to the *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003* (DIMA). Specifically, ANCO members Peter D. Eisenberg, M.D., *Founder and Past President*, and Jack Keech, Jr., D.O., *Director and Past President*, are quoted with regard to the changes

**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.

being implemented in their practices and how they are informing their patients about DIMA.

US Oncology (visit www.legislink.com), the **National Patient Advocate Foundation** (NPAF; visit www.npaf.org), and other community organizations have announced the launch of **AccessWatch** (www.accesswatch.org), a new Web-based information clearinghouse designed to help track and inform lawmakers about how changes to Medicare reimbursements implemented by DIMA are affecting patient access to community cancer care. AccessWatch is designed to track and analyze information on such consequences as treatment site closures, referral of patients from the community setting to hospitals, reduction in clinical trial accruals, reduction of charity care, decreased patient access to care due to inability to meet co-insurance obligations, reduction of nursing and other staff, reduction of care and transportation services in rural communities, and the discontinuation of social work, nutritional counseling and related essential support services. We encourage you, your colleagues and staff, your patients and their families to utilize AccessWatch by visiting www.AccessWatch.org.

ANCO will keep its members informed of developments as they happen with regard to these very important issues. In the meantime, please share how your practice plans on accommodating to the new Medicare reimbursement environment via e-mail to jlgonzalez@aol.com.

ANCO is a member of the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCC) that is launching a new advocacy effort to impact policies for access to quality cancer care. It is clear to NCCC that members of Congress need to hear directly from more cancer survivors and their loved ones if they are going to take action to preserve and expand access to quality cancer care. NCCC's new **Cancer Advocacy Now** network will use the internet and e-mail to mobilize survivors and their advocates so they can contact their *Representatives* and *Senators* at key points in the legislative process. Interested individuals can enroll in the network at www.canceradvocacy.org.

People Living With Cancer (www.plwc.org) is ASCO's award-winning patient website that provides information on more than 50 types of cancer, coping resources, live chats, interactive message boards, and more. It provides accurate, reliable, and oncologist-approved cancer information for your patients. In addition, ASCO publishes the following patient information:

- *The Cancer Handbook (2nd Edition)*, a comprehensive resource of cancer information.
- *ASCO Patient Guides*, a series of guides adapted from ASCO's Clinical Practice Guidelines.
- *Cancer Advances*, a series of patient publications reporting the latest in cancer research.
- *Technology Assessments for Consumers*, a series of ASCO evaluations of medical procedures, devices, and tests.

To obtain copies of these materials, please contact ASCO's Communications and Patient Information Department at (703) 797-1914, or via e-mail at communications@asco.org.

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.]

States Senator Deborah Ortiz has introduced Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 25 asking Congress to correct the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (DIMA). It reads in part:

WHEREAS, In 2004 [DIMA] has resulted in potential problems of patient access to cancer treatment in doctor's offices, because the payment amounts for 2004 for some drugs are lower than the price at which physicians can purchase them; and

WHEREAS, For 2005 and later years, [DIMA] reduces the payments for

cancer treatment drugs and administration services further relative to their 2004 levels, with no mechanism for adjustments to ensure that the payment levels are not lower than the prices at which physicians can purchase them...

Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California memorializes the Congress and President of the United States to enact and sign into law revisions to the [DIMA] to...ensure that the payment amounts for cancer treatment drugs in 2005 and in later years are sufficient to cover physicians' costs of acquiring these drugs; to revise [DIMA's] transitional adjustment payment for drug administration services to an amount that will maintain net revenue available to physicians from drugs and drug administration services in 2005 and 2006 at the same level as in 2004...

ANCO and MOASC will be working for passage of SJR25 and urge every California oncologist to do likewise. It is our intention to share SJR25 with our colleagues across the nation.

In January 2004, California launched the **Paid Family Leave (PFL) insurance program**, an expansion of existing State Disability Insurance (SDI) that extends partial wage replacement benefits to SDI-covered employees who must provide care for a seriously-ill child, spouse, parent, or registered domestic partner, or who need time to bond with a new child. Medical providers play a key role in the new program since claims for benefits must include a medical provider's certification attesting to the serious health condition (i.e., illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, residential health care facility, or continuing treatment or supervision of a health care provider) of the patient, and the need for a family member to provide care. The medical information must include a diagnosis and an ICD-9 code. Medical providers are also asked to

determine if a patient's physical or mental health condition requires physical care or emotional support from a family member. For additional information, including downloadable brochures, on PFL visit www.edd.ca.gov.

ANCO (and MOSC) are the latest organizations to endorse the *California Tobacco Control Alliance's* (www.tobaccofreealliance.org) public action campaign entitled *Smoking Cessation Benefits Everyone*. The Alliance is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in addition to the American Cancer Society, California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Integrated Healthcare Association, California Healthcare Foundation, and American Academy of Pediatrics. The goals of the campaign are:

- to increase coverage of cessation services by managed care organizations;
- to increase the ability of health care providers to routinely and consistently conduct cessation interventions; and,
- to increase demand from consumers and health care purchasers for coverage and delivery services.

ANCO encourages all its members to support this campaign.

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.]

Visit www.medicarenhic.com/whats_new/whats_new.shtml to learn the latest information from NHIC/Medicare, including:

- Elimination of grace period for discontinued ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes effective October 1st, 2004.
- Implementation of the new Medicare Redetermination Notice.
- Updated remittance advice remark and claim adjustment reason codes.
- New specialty page for Non-Physician Practitioners.

The *Medicare B Resource* (March 2004) is now available online at www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider_news/ca-mbr/04-1.pdf. Among the items of specific interest to oncology practices are:

- CCI Edits Quarterly Update
- Clinical Lab Revised Fee Schedule 2004
- Darbepoetin Alfa (Aranesp) and Epoetin Alfa (Epogen, EPO) Billing
- Duplicate Billing Denials
- Home Health Consolidated Billing Code Annual Update
- Injection Pricing 2004
- Mandatory Electronic Submission of Medicare Claims Under HIPAA

The next *NHIC/Medicare Advisory Forum* (MAF) teleconference takes place on March 16th; the next *NHIC/Medicare Carrier Advisory Committee* (CAC) meeting takes place in Los Angeles on April 21st; 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.]

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 the ASH Annual Meeting. This meeting will take place at The Claremont Resort, Oakland. *UC San Francisco* is accrediting this program for continuing education units. *biogenIDEC*, *Cell Therapeutics*, *Genentech BioOncology*, *Genta*, *Novartis Oncology*, and *Wyeth Oncology* are supporting this meeting. Announcements were mailed in mid February.

Expanding Medical Oncology Practice Beyond Chemotherapy: A New Business Model

On Tuesday through Thursday afternoons, April 20th-22nd, in Sacramento, San Francisco, and San José, Lawrence Piro, M.D., will present a series of meetings for physicians, nurses, and practice managers on how to diversify service and product lines in medical oncology practices. *biogenIDEC* is sponsoring these meetings. Announcements will be mailed in mid March.

Other ANCO Meetings

Additional ANCO meetings (*ASCO Highlights*, an *Annual Meeting*) 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:

ANCO thanks

biogenIDEC, Cell Therapeutics,
Genentech BioOncology, Genta,
Novartis Oncology, & Wyeth Oncology

for supporting clinical and professional education.

March 17-20th
30th Annual National Meeting: Oncology at the Crossroads—Assuring Excellence and Access to Care
Association of
Community Cancer
Centers

Washington, D.C.

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 Your Life!
Oncology Nursing Society
Anaheim

May 4-7th
2004 Spring Conference
California Hospice Foundation
San José

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

June 10-11th

Pain and End-of-Life Care

University of California, San Francisco
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 weblog with important news for oncology practices.
- Links to affiliated organizations.
- A general description of the *Association* and its activities.
- ANCO's publications, advocacy information, and educational meeting announcements and materials.

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.

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.

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

Two ANCO members are among ASCO's new leadership. **Sandra J. Horning**, M.D., a medical oncologist at *Stanford University Medical Center*, is ASCO's new *President-Elect*. She will serve as *President* in 2005-2006, after the term of David H. Johnson, M.D. **Peter D. Eisenberg**, M.D., ANCO *Founder* and *Past President*, was elected to the Community Oncologist seat on the *ASCO Board of Directors*. ANCO congratulates these new leaders and appreciates their time commitment to serve the membership.

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):

PHYSICIAN MEMBERS

Michael L. Figueroa, M.D.

Cancer Care Consultants
of Northern California
Post Office Box 993100
Redding, CA 96099-3100

Contacts: Pamala Reed, F.N.P.

Jennifer Stahl

Telephone: (530) 244-2223

FAX: (530) 244-4799

jstahl@shasta.com

Nancy Rubin, D.O.

Cancer Associates
of Monterey Peninsula
700 Cass Street, Suite 122
Monterey, CA 93940

Contacts: Jana Allen, R.N.

Marcy Jae Levin

Telephone: (831) 375-4777

FAX: (831) 375-0462

NURSE & OFFICE MANAGERS

Mickie Cecchini

St. Teresa
Comprehensive Cancer Center
4722 Quail Lakes Drive, Suite A
Stockton, CA 95207

Telephone: (209) 477-2000

FAX: (209) 477-0248

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.

AstraZeneca announced that, effective February 25th, it has reduced the **Wholesale Acquisition Cost (WAC)** of **Faslodex** by \$19.19 per unit from \$786.93 to \$767.74 and that it expects this reduction to be passed onto providers.

Genentech BioOncology announced that the **Food and Drug Administration** has approved **Avastin** as an initial treatment with standard chemotherapy for metastatic colorectal cancer.

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*

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. As a result of a new California law, AB487, beginning in 2002 California physicians must take 12 hours of

CME in pain and palliative care. This course is developed to meet these new CME requirements. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=DMM04462 for more information.

For additional information on meetings being organized by the *UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center*, visit cc.ucsf.edu/news/events.html.

The *American Medical Association* (AMA) also offers a 12-hour **online CME course in pain management**. It is available at www.ama-cmeonline.com.

Publications & Surveys

Because you need to know how your patients feel about your systems, services and performance, the *Association of Northern California Oncologists* (ANCO) and *Medical Oncology Association of Southern California* (MOASC) are using our combined strength to offer you a reliable **patient satisfaction survey** at a steep discount. Patient loyalty, and their willingness to refer friends and family members, are major influences on the success of your practice. In addition, patient satisfaction data collected on surveys can be used to negotiate attractive reimbursement rates during contract talks. Among the major benefits of the process are:

- *Easy-to-complete survey* covering issues important to patients and payers
- *Turn-key service* requiring minimal staff time
- *Questionnaires personalized* with practice/physician names at no extra cost
- *Easy-to-read reports* with no need for an interpretation guide
- *Individual physician reports* for meeting accreditation requirements
- *Benchmarking* your scores with the ANCO/MOASC database

This is a repeat of our previous patient satisfaction surveys. We encourage all practices to participate. ANCO and MOASC will fund the set-up fee so that our members can participate for a discounted rate of \$70 for each physician. Contact the ANCO office to

participate in the Patient Satisfaction Survey for 2004.

The *California Oncology Consortium/MOASC Drug Grid 2004* has been updated and is now available online at www.californiaoncology.org or via www.anco-online.org. The *Drug Grid* is a comprehensive guide to oncology billing, coding, and coverage decisions by NHIC/Medicare, DHS/MediCal, and the DMERC. For each drug (accessible by either its generic or brand name), the HCPCS J-code, DHS x-code, FDA-labeled and *Compendia* listed off-label (both USP-DI and AHFS) indications, and Medicare, MediCal, and DMERC coverages are provided. A username and password are required to use the *Drug Grid* and may be obtained from the ANCO office. A .pdf version of the *Drug Grid* is also available for download. ANCO acknowledges the permission of MOASC for allowing distribution of this information to ANCO members.

Membership Dues for 2004

Second notices of membership renewal were mailed in mid February 2004. Return your 2004 membership dues to ANCO at your earliest convenience. Be sure to take advantage of dues discounts and provide ANCO with the name(s) of an office and nurse manager contact. 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.

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!