

ANCO FAX News

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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, April 23rd.

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.]

ACCC's *Center for Provider Education* is organizing a series of regional educational sessions entitled *Life in the New Medicare Era: Coding, Billing, and Management for Medical Oncology Practices*. Designed for physicians, practice managers, and coders/billers, these practical and hands-on sessions will explore the primary components of oncology billing, the impact of Medicare reform, and help oncology practices operate more efficiently 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 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.

effectively. A San Francisco meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 11th. For more information and to register online, visit www.accc-cancer.org/education or contact the ANCO office.

Among the highlights of the *Administrators in Hematology Oncology Assembly (AOHA) Annual Meeting* were:

- Deborah Kamin, Ph.D., ASCO's *Senior Director of Cancer Policy & Clinical Affairs*, outlining ongoing legislative activities in Washington, D.C. and emphasizing ASCO's goal of achieving reimbursement policy that will ensure patient access to high-quality care without disruption.
- José Luis González, ANCO's *Executive Director*, discussing the importance of state oncology societies in payer relations.
- Numerous sessions on how to assess and adapt to the impact of Medicare reform on your oncology practice.

Copies of some of these and other presentations are available from the ANCO office.

ASCO's latest edition of *MMA Today* was published on April 1st. In summary:

- ASCO continues to meet with *Congressional* and CMS leadership, is developing new materials to inform *Congress*, and placing targeted advocacy advertisements.
- ASCO will make a presentation to CMS at their April 20th *Special Listening Session* addressing implementation of the competitive bidding provisions of Medicare reform.

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.]

State Senator Deborah Ortiz's *Senate Joint Resolution* (SJR) 25, asking *Congress* to correct the cancer care provisions of Medicare reform, passed the *State Senate* and is in the *Assembly*. ANCO urges its members to contact their *State Assemblymembers* in support of SJR25.

Join ANCO (and MOASC) at CMA's *Legislative Leadership Day* in Sacramento on April 28th. To RSVP, call or e-mail CMA at (916) 444-5532 or legday@cmanet.org and let them know you want to be seated with the ANCO/MOASC (oncology) delegation.

ANCO endorses the *California Tobacco Control Alliance's* public action campaign entitled *Smoking Cessation Benefits Everyone*. ANCO 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.]

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

The *Medicare B Resource* (March 2004) is now available online at www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider_news/ca-mbr/04-1.pdf.

NHIC/Medicare has published a draft *Local Coverage Determination* (LCD) on its website for **darbepoetin alfa** (Aranesp; J0880, Q0137). Visit www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/lmrp/draft/darbepoetinalfa_draftlmrp.htm for complete details. In summary, the draft LCD covers Aranesp for its labeled and compendia listed indications, that is:

- Anemia of end stage renal disease (ESRD) patients requiring dialysis.
- Anemia of chronic renal failure (CRF).
- Anemia due to chemotherapy for non-myeloid malignancy.
- Anemia as a result of malignancy.

This is more restrictive than the NHIC/Medicare website article dated January 8th, 2004. In addition, the initiation point for therapy and coding/billing instructions have

been changed. The notice and comment period begins on April 21st and ends on June 4th. Please send ANCO your input for inclusion in our comments on this proposed policy.

The next *NHIC/Medicare Advisory Forum* (MAF) teleconference takes place on June 15th; 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.

Private Payers

ANCO members have informed us that *Blue Shield of California*, in a letter to its physician members dated March 1st, announced that it

...will be implementing changes to our professional allowances. Procedure code allowances that are based upon the RBRVS (resource-based relative value scale) methodology will align with the 2004

relativity...effective beginning April 1st...*Blue Shield* will be increasing drug

administration code allowances and therefore the drug code (J-code) allowances will be calculated using a nationally recognized pricing resource at current AWP less 12%...the reimbursement for any given service code will be above what you receive from CMS as we have set a higher conversion factor...

EDUCATION

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

Expanding Medical Oncology Practice in a New Environment: An Evolution to Individualized Medicine

On Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, April 20th and 21st, in Sacramento and San Francisco, 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 were mailed in mid March.

SAVE THE DATE!

UCSF/ANCO/MOASC Reception in Honor of Margaret A. Tempero, M.D., ASCO President

Join your colleagues from ANCO and MOASC, Dr. Tempero's colleagues from UCSF, as well as other national oncology leaders at a reception at ASCO's 40th Annual Meeting in honor of Dr. Tempero's exemplary leadership of ASCO during this pivotal time in community oncology. This event takes place on Sunday, June 6th, at 5PM at the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans and is open to ANCO and MOASC members, representatives from sponsoring organizations (*biogenIDEC*, *Genentech BioOncology*, *Genomic Health*, *Glaxo SmithKline*, *MGI Pharma*, *Ortho Biotech*, and *Pfizer Oncology*), and other invitees. Invitations

will be mailed in mid April.

SAVE THE DATE!

ANCO's Annual ASCO Highlights 2004

On Tuesday evening, September 14th, in Oakland, a distinguished faculty from ANCO's Institutional Members will present ANCO's annual *ASCO Highlights 2004*. This year's meeting will be accredited by ASCO. Watch for announcements in July.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

April 29th-May 2nd

29th Annual Congress—The Ride of Your Life!

Oncology Nursing Society

Anaheim

May 7-9th

Lung Cancer Symposium

International Oncology Network

Las Vegas, NV

May 11th

Life in the New Medicare Era: Coding, Billing,

ANCO thanks
biogenIDEC
for supporting clinical and professional education.

and Management for Medical Oncology Practices
 Association of Community Cancer Centers
 San Francisco

May 15th
Emerging Strategies for Cancer Therapy
 University of California, San Francisco
 San Francisco

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

July 16-18th
Business of Oncology
 International Oncology Network
 Washington, DC

August 28th
Emerging Approaches to Breast & Colon Cancer Management
 National Oncology Alliance
 San Diego

September 25th
New Advances in Supportive Care
 National Oncology Alliance
 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.

The following item(s) were added to the website since the previous *ANCO FAX News*:

- *ASH Highlights 2003* PowerPoint presentations.

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 March 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* teleconferenced on April 6th. Among the issues discussed and/or acted upon were:

- Additional membership benefits, including group purchasing activities.
- ANCO's potential role in clinical trials.

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 serve the membership. *Board* meetings are open to the membership. The **next regularly scheduled ANCO Board of Directors teleconference** will take place on May 13th. 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):

NURSE & OFFICE MANAGERS

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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 • 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.

Institutional Member News

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 encourages its members to participate in our Institutional Member's clinical trials that can be accessed via www.anco-online.org/advocacy.html.

UCSF's *Emerging Strategies for Cancer Therapy* takes place in San Francisco on May 15th. This course is designed to educate physicians and other health care providers about

inhibitors of the epidermal growth factor (EGF) family of receptors and agents that block vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF)-mediated angiogenesis. Attendees will learn the basic biology underlying these novel therapeutic approaches and the potential differences between small molecule receptor tyrosine kinase inhibitors and antibody-based strategies. The course *Chairs* are Emily Bergsland, M.D., Robert Ignoffo, Pharm.D., Thierry Jahan, M.D., Brian Rini, M.D., Hope Rugo, M.D., and Alan Venook, M.D., UCSF. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=DMH04414 for more information.

UCSF's *Pain and End-of-Life Care* takes place in San Francisco on June 10-11th. 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.

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

ANCO also endorses the CMA's *Pain Palliation and Politics: Pain Management and End-of-Life Care in California's Regulatory Environment* programs. Watch for additional details on location(s) and date(s) for 2004.

For additional information on continuing medical education meetings being organized by our Institutional Members, please visit cancercenter.stanford.edu, www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/about/events/index.html, and cc.ucsf.edu/news/events.html.

Publications & Surveys

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

Final notices of membership renewal were mailed in early April 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!