

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, May 7th.

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.

ASCO's latest edition of *MMA Today* was published on April 14th. In summary:

- The results of ASCO's 2004 Member Survey assessing the *Society's* handling of Medicare reimbursement issues has resulted in new tools to deliver the message of the community physicians in a clearer, more targeted fashion to *Capitol Hill*, the *White House*, and CMS.
- CMS has issued several corrections to the 2004 Medicare drug payment rates, retroactive to January 1st.
- *Representative* Nancy Johnson, *Chair, House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health*, asked *Members of Congress* to urge oncology groups in their districts to complete a survey that will collect critical data for assessing whether the new Medicare reimbursement rates accurately reflect practice costs. The AMA is distributing the survey to oncologists in the next month and ASCO contributed to its development.

US Oncology (visit www.legislink.com), the **National Patient Advocate Foundation** (NPAF; visit www.npaf.org), and other community organizations have launched AccessWatch (www.accesswatch.org), a new Web-based information clearinghouse designed to help track and inform lawmakers about how changes to Medicare reimbursement are affecting patient access to community cancer care (e.g., treatment site closures, referrals to hospitals, reductions in clinical trial accruals, reductions of nursing and other staff). ANCO encourages you, your colleagues and staff, your patients and their families to utilize AccessWatch by visiting www.AccessWatch.org.

The ANCO *Board of Directors* recognizes that its primary mission is to accurately reflect the views and needs of community oncologists in Northern California. It is also our mission to convey the viewpoint of our members to national and other state oncology societies.

Recent changes enacted by the *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003* (DIMA) have threatened the viability of community oncology practice and, in turn, created dissension among oncologists as to how best to remedy the problem. Two voices have been heard in Congress—those of ASCO and the *Community Oncology Alliance* (COA). These organizations speak with differing opinions, intonations and style, and each feels its voice rings truer. ANCO has had a close and productive relationship with ASCO, and ASCO continues to have the full confidence of the ANCO *Board*. Nevertheless, the ANCO *Board* wants to be sure that it accurately reflect the sentiment of its members. Therefore, the ANCO *Board of Directors* is surveying via FAX broadcast member practices on their opinions of ASCO and COA. ANCO encourages all member practices to participate in this survey and to contact the ANCO office if you did not receive a copy of the survey.

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.

CMA's all new 2004 *California Physician's Legal Handbook* at over 4,000 pages is even more comprehensive than prior editions and extensively indexed by subject, law, website, form, and court case. The *Handbook* answers the

legal questions most frequently asked by physicians. It includes practical summaries of California and federal laws as well as sample forms and letters, and the actual text of the laws of greatest interest to physicians. To order your copy, visit the CMA Bookstore at www.cmanet.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.]

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

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

The most recent *NHIC/Medicare Carrier Advisory Committee* (CAC) meeting took place in Los Angeles on April 21st. Among the topics discussed at the meeting were:

- a draft *Local Coverage Determination* (LCD) for **darbepoetin alfa** (Aranesp; J0880, Q0137).

Visit www.medicarenhic.com/cal_prov/lmrp/draft/darbepoetinalfa_draftlmrp.htm to read the draft LCD.

In summary, the draft LCD covers darbepoetin alfa 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.

However, the draft LCD also:

- reduces the number of covered indications included in the NHIC/Medicare website article dated January 8th, 2004 thereby limiting beneficiary access.
- establishes a fixed hemoglobin initiation level of 11g/dl rather than allowing for a treatment target (per current policy), setting

a different standard of care for beneficiaries receiving darbepoetin alfa.

- does not allow for FDA-approved dosing of up to 4.5mcg/kg in chemotherapy-induced anemia, potentially limiting dosing flexibility for providers and beneficiaries.
- requires a paper claim with documentation to be submitted for every claim where the hemoglobin is over 12g/dl, increasing administrative burden on providers and the carrier.
- requires submission of three (3) ICD-9 codes for chemotherapy-induced anemia, increasing coding complexity and potential coding errors.

The notice and comment period for this draft LCD ends on June 4th. It is very important for NHIC/Medicare to receive comment from local providers regarding how they use darbepoetin alfa. Please review it and submit your comments to NHIC/Medicare at canhiclmrpfeedback@exwe01.exch.eds.com with a copy to ANCO at jlgonzalez@aol.com.

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., presented a series of meetings to a cumulative audience of approximately 40 physicians, nurses, practice managers, and others on how to diversify service and product lines in medical oncology practices. *biogenIDEC* sponsored these meetings.

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

May 7-9th
Lung Cancer Symposium
International Oncology Network
Las Vegas, NV

May 11th
Life in the New Medicare Era: Coding, Billing, 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

June 19th
ASCO Review
International Oncology Network
Southern California

July 10th
ASCO Review 2004
National Oncology Alliance
San Diego

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

ANCO thanks

biogenIDEC

for supporting clinical and professional education.

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.

NOA recently announced contract (i.e., product, rebate, and/or pricing) changes for Aloxi, Etyol, Kytril, Nipent, OTN Brand pamidronate and vinorelbine, Sandostatin LAR Depot, and Sicor generics.

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.

Sicor, a HOLN partner, is sponsoring a continuing medical education (approved for 1 CE credit) dinner symposium entitled *New*

Approaches in Safe Handling of Hazardous Drugs on Thursday, April 29th at 5:30PM at the Anaheim Hilton Hotel during the *Oncology Nursing Society* meeting. To register for this meeting, visit www.newsicor.com or register at the venue on a first come first serve basis. Contact the ANCO office for additional information.

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 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):

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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

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

OSI Pharmaceuticals • Pfizer Oncology

Roche Oncology • Sanofi-Synthelabo

Schering Oncology/Biotech

SuperGen • US Oncology • Wyeth Oncology

We especially wish to thank and welcome *Genomic Health*, *Genta*, *OSI Pharmaceuticals*, and *Schering Oncology/Biotech* as new Corporate Members in 2004. *IMPATH* has resigned as a Corporate Member of ANCO.

Final notices of Corporate Membership renewal were mailed in early April 2004.

Return your 2004 Corporate Membership dues to ANCO at your earliest convenience.

ANCO members are also encouraged to provide the names of organizations that are not currently Corporate Members to the ANCO office.

AstraZeneca reduced the wholesale acquisition cost (WAC) price of Faslodex on February 25th by \$19.09 per unit from \$786.93 to \$767.74.

Genentech BioOncology and UCSF seek ANCO member participation in *An Observational Cohort Study of Patients with Her2-Positive Metastatic Breast Cancer*, a post-marketing, non-IND clinical trial. For a protocol synopsis and to establish investigator contact, please visit biooncology.ninaza.com or e-mail kschiff@gene.com or hope.rugo@ucsfmedctr.org.

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 members can obtain information about our Institutional Member's clinical trials 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) and agents that block vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF)-mediated angiogenesis. Attendees will learn the basic biology underlying these novel therapeutic approaches. 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 medicine.ucsf.edu/cme/2004cal/H04414.html 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. It meets California's requirement that physicians take 12 hours of CME in pain and palliative care. Visit medicine.ucsf.edu/cme/2004cal/M04462.html for more information.

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, Services, & Surveys

ANCO announces the *DIMA Practice Preparedness Survey* for members. This Survey consists 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 will share the cost of the site visit. Announcements of this Survey were FAX broadcast in mid April.

ANCO also recently FAXed to all member practices a **model practice statement to patients regarding DIMA**. While generic and general in nature, the statement advises patients that there may be changes in the way their illness is treated in the medical oncology practice due to DIMA. A .pdf

version of the document for reproduction and distribution or a .txt version of the document for editing is available from the ANCO office via e-mail at jlgonzalez@aol.com.

ANCO and *Novartis Oncology*, are distributing copies of *Living with Breast Cancer*, a film produced by Alan Kramer, M.D., ANCO Treasurer. Novartis representatives will deliver a choice of VHS videotape or DVD to each ANCO member practice in May. The film explores how adolescent and teenage children cope when their mothers are diagnosed with breast cancer. Vanessa, a second year high school student, asks children and families about their experiences in dealing with breast cancer, and also asks parallel questions to Dr. Laura Palmer, a child psychologist from *Stanford University*. Shortly after the completion of this documentary, Vanessa's mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, and she was soon dealing with the same issues firsthand. The film was a finalist at the 2002 *Freddie Awards* for medical and health media excellence.

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(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 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!