

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

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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 routinely sent to physician member practices and corporate member contacts. The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on Friday, May 21st.

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 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.

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 continues to work towards ensuring that people with cancer continue to have access to quality cancer care in the community. Here is some of what ASCO has done recently:

- Dean Gesme, M.D., incoming *Chair* of the *Clinical Practice Committee*, communicated ASCO's concerns with the new competitive acquisition system during the CMS Listening Session on April 20th. Dr. Gesme's remarks focused on specific unanswered questions about the new system that could restrict access to quality cancer care, including ordering drugs, product integrity, handling of inventory, unused drug, costs incurred by physicians, denied claims, and unpaid coinsurance. Visit www.asco.org/mma and follow the links to *MMA Today* for April 28th to download his extended remarks.
- *Ask ASCO* kits containing materials on how DIMA will affect cancer care have been distributed to *Congress*. These kits can be downloaded from www.asco.org/mma and following the links to *Ask ASCO*.
- Targeted surveys to monitor the implementation of DIMA and provide ASCO with vital data needed to address its issues have been launched. The first is a *Service Line Study* in cooperation with AOHA designed to identify and determine the extent of oncology support services in community practices. The second is an *AMA study* designed to determine DIMA's impact on patient care in 2004 and provide a baseline against which to measure anticipated changes in 2005.
- *Senator Kit Bond* (R, MO) sent a letter to CMS urging them to calculate the projected drug payment rates for 2005 and share those payment rates with

Congress and the cancer community so they can fully analyze the extent of payment reductions in 2005 and potential impacts on cancer care.

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 being considered by the *Assembly Health Committee*. ANCO urges its members to contact their *State Assemblymembers* in support of SJR25.

ANCO (and MOASC) helped sponsor CMA's *Legislative Leadership Day* in Sacramento on April 28th. Highlights included:

- recognition of ANCO and MOASC at the plenary session.
- presentations by CMA staff on significant pieces of legislation.
- a panel discussion on California's current political landscape.
- visits with legislators.

In summary, ANCO, in cooperation with *Noteware Government Relations*, continues to make progress in raising the profile of oncology within the CMA and the California legislature.

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.

NHIC/Medicare has proposed 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 canhiclmrpfedback@exwe01.exch.eds.com with a copy to ANCO at jlgonzalez@aol.com.

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 Oakland in July 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.]

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 and our other Institutional Members, 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:

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

June 20-26th

Food as Medicine: Integrating Nutrition Into Clinical Practice and Medical Education
Center for Mind-Body Medicine
Oakland

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 11-12th

Cancer as a Turning Point: From Surviving to Thriving
Healing Journeys [(916) 930-9040, (800) 423-9882 or www.healingjourneys.org]
Sacramento

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.

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 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 Abbott 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 better 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 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

Ranjana Advani, M.D.

Stanford University Medical Oncology
875 Blake Wilbur Drive
Stanford, CA 94305
Telephone: (650) 723-7621
FAX: (650) 725-9113
radvani@stanford.edu

Robert Carlson, M.D.

Stanford University Medical Oncology
875 Blake Wilbur Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Telephone: (650) 725-6457
FAX: (650) 725-8222
rcarlson@stanford.edu

George A. Fisher, M.D., Ph.D.

Stanford University Medical Oncology
875 Blake Wilbur Drive
Stanford, CA 94305
Contact: Cindy Winstead
Telephone: (650) 725-9057
FAX: (650) 498-5353
georgeaf@leland.stanford.edu

Sandra Horning, M.D.

Stanford University Medical Oncology
875 Blake Wilbur Drive
Stanford, CA 94305
Telephone: (650) 725-6456
FAX: (650) 725-8222
sandra.horning@stanford.edu

Charlotte Jacobs, M.D.

Stanford University Medical Oncology
875 Blake Wilbur Drive
Stanford, CA 94305
Telephone: (650) 725-8738
FAX: (650) 498-4696
cjacobs@stanford.edu

Alice Reier, M.D.

3100 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 3101
Oakland, CA 94609
Contacts: Judy Liquori
Gwennett Robinson
Telephone: (415) 923-3012
FAX: (415) 928-4840

Sandy Srinivas, M.D.

Stanford University Medical Oncology
875 Blake Wilbur Drive
Stanford, CA 94305
Telephone: (650) 725-2078
FAX: (650) 498-5353
sandysri@stanford.edu

Larry Strieff, M.D.

3100 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 3101
Oakland, CA 94609
Contacts: Judy Liquori
Gwennett Robinson

Telephone: (415) 923-3012
 FAX: (415) 928-4840

OFFICE & NURSE MANAGERS

Brad Duke

East Bay Medical Oncology-Hematology
 Associates
 2700 Grant Street, Suite 106
 Concord, CA 94520
 Telephone: (925) 687-2570
 FAX: (925) 687-2847
 brad.duke@pacbell.net

Judy Liquori

3100 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 3101
 Oakland, CA 94609
 Telephone: (415) 923-3012
 FAX: (415) 928-4840

Christine Raymond, R.N.

Valley Medical Oncology Consultants
 5720 Stoneridge Mall Road, Suite 310
 Pleasanton, CA 94588
 Telephone: (925) 734-8130
 FAX: (925) 225-9520
 craymond@vmoc.com

Gwennett Robinson

3100 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 3101
 Oakland, CA 94609
 Telephone: (415) 923-3012
 FAX: (415) 928-4840

Cindy Winstead

Stanford University Medical Oncology
 875 Blake Wilbur Drive
 Stanford, CA 94305
 Telephone: (650) 725-9057
 FAX: (650) 498-5353
 cindyw1@stanford.edu

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
 Lash Group Healthcare Consultants
 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, Lash Group Healthcare Consultants, 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.

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.

UC Davis, ANCO, and several other local agencies are cooperating on a *National Institutes of Health* project aimed at

overcoming barriers to early phase clinical trials. You can learn more about this project at www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/clinical_trials/bigc/

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**. 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 beginning in mid-May. The film explores how adolescent and teenage children cope when their mothers are diagnosed with breast cancer. 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!