

ANCO FAX News

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Vol. 4, No. 3

February 4th, 2005

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 sent to physician member practices and corporate member contacts. The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on February 25th.

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; ExecDir@anco-online.org.

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 **ASCO Clinical Practice Committee (CPC) and ACCC State Oncology Society Presidents Retreat** at the end of January. The ASCO CPC discussed the following issues:

- CMS and *Congress* want to ensure that Medicare **drug reimbursement** is correct

**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.

and that no drug is under reimbursed. The *Office of Inspector General* (OIG) is charged with ensuring that providers can obtain drugs at 106% of ASP and will be contacting provider offices to survey their purchase prices. The OIG study is due in October 2005. ASCO urges all contacted practices to participate in this study. MedPAC is also studying MMA's impact on cancer care. Its report is due in January 2007. ASCO is cooperating with this study.

- ASCO has identified and reported local carrier **drug administration and demonstration project claims processing** problems to CMS. They have commenced discussion on the issues of **bad debt and site of care shifts** due to MMA.

- ASCO/NCCS's **annual media and Congressional briefing** will take place on February 15th and will emphasize access to quality care and clinical trials.

- AMA's **CPT Editorial Panel** meets in February 2005 to finalize language defining the new drug administration codes. It will address the issue of IV pushes/infusions less than 30 minutes.

- ASCO/ASH will seek to obtain a permanent seat on AMA's **Relative-value Update Committee** (RUC). The management of drug orders (a practice expense issue) will be discussed by the RUC in the near future. ASCO will survey the membership on this issue in advance.

- CMS is seeking to cover otherwise not covered services in exchange for data upon which to base a final decision. The **National Coverage Decision** (NCD) covering colorectal cancer drugs for patients enrolled in **National Cancer Institute** trials is its first application of this policy. The PET Registry NCD is another application of this policy.

- *Thompson Micromedex* has acquired **USP DI**, is finalizing an advisory board, and working on the backlog of off-label indications.

- ASCO's **Cancer Research Committee** is reconsidering ASCO's CAM policy and is recommending regional *Clinical Trials Workshops*.

- ASCO's **Journal of Oncology Practice** will debut in May as a 64-page bimonthly focusing on issues facing the clinical practice of oncology.

A report on the *ACCC Presidents Retreat* will be published in the next issue of the *ANCO FAX News*.

ANCO and ASCO continue to work towards ensuring that people with cancer have access to quality cancer care in the community. ASCO's CPC also teleconferenced on Thursday, February 3rd. Here is the latest with regard to the *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003* (MMA):

- ASCO needs help identifying local carrier (NHIC/Medicare) **coding/payment issues to be brought to CMS's attention.** ASCO is passing along local information to CMS; and, CMS is reporting back to ASCO after contacting local carriers individually or via national teleconference. These are the questions ASCO needs answered:

- 1) Have you received payments for chemotherapy administration services rendered in 2005 and billed using the new G codes?

- 2) Did NHIC/Medicare recognize the new G codes and pay correctly based on the codes reported? Did you have any problems?

- 3) If you experienced problems with having your claims processed, please describe those problems.

Please be as specific as possible in your responses to ANCO (at ExecDir@anco-online.org) and ASCO (at practice@asco.org). Or call/FAX ASCO's *Cancer Policy and Clinical Affairs Department* at (703) 299-1050/(703) 684-8364 to submit your information

(absent any patient identifier information). Any information that you send to ASCO will be kept completely confidential.

Also bring these difficulties (and the resulting cash flow problems) to the attention of your *Congressional Representatives*.

- ASCO's *ASP Spreadsheet Tool & Guide* (available at www.anco-online.org/mma.html) allows you to analyze the impact of the 1Q05 Medicare drug allowables on your practice. Please report your actual prices to ASCO by sending a copy of your completed spreadsheet to aspspreadsheet@asco.org.

- CMS's coding guidelines for drug administration and cancer care demonstration project G-codes are available at www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/pm_trans/R129OTN.pdf (on drug administration) and www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/pm_trans/R12DEMO.pdf (on the demonstration project).

- Materials from ASCO's audio conference entitled *Adapting to Medicare Changes*, including a sample cancer care demonstration project documentation form, are available at www.anco-online.org/mma.html.

Visit www.asco.org/mma, www.anco-online.org/mma.html, or call/e-mail ASCO's billing and coding hotline at (703) 299-1054/practice@asco.org for up-to-date information on changes in coding for drug administration services, as well as billing and payments 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.]

Robert S. Miller, M.D., ANCO *Past President* and *Board Member* testified before the California *State Senate Business, Professions, and Economic Development Committee* on January 28th. The topic of the hearing was *Alternative and Complementary Health Care: Building Common Ground Within The Medical Community and the Treatment of Cancer Patients*. Dr. Miller concluded:

It is the position of the *Association of Northern California Oncologists* that, until a cancer treatment is proven to be safe and efficacious, its use cannot be endorsed except in the context of a controlled clinical trial that tests its benefits in a reproducible and scientifically valid fashion. [ANCO is] strongly opposed to any legislation that would serve to promote the more widespread availability and use of any cancer therapy prior to appropriate investigation. We must not allow the growing popularity of CAM and its apparent acceptance in some traditional medical circles to relieve us of our primary responsibility of ensuring the safety and benefit of our patients.

EDUCATION

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

San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium Highlights 2004

On Wednesday, January 26th, faculty from *UC San Francisco* (Laura J. Esserman, M.D., M.B.A., Catherine C. Park, M.D., Michelle E. Melisko, M.D., and John W. Park, M.D.) reviewed the most clinically relevant studies presented at

December 2004's meeting in San Antonio before an audience of approximately 120 physicians, nurses, and others. Hope S. Rugo, M.D., moderated this meeting at the Hotel Nikko, San Francisco. ASCO accredited this meeting for 3 CEUs. Sponsors and exhibitors for this meeting included *Berlex Laboratories, Genentech BioOncology, Genomic Health, International Oncology Network/Oncology Supply, MGI Pharma, Novartis Oncology, Pfizer Oncology, Sanofi-Aventis, and US Oncology*. Download the presentations at www.anco-online.org/sanantonio.html.

Times Change: Advanced Medicare Reimbursement for Medical Oncology—An ANCO MMA Audio Conference

On Wednesday, February 2nd at 12PM, Bobbi Buell, M.B.A., *CodeMistress*, provided a 2005 Medicare update entitled *Times Change: Advanced Medicare Reimbursement Seminar for Medical Oncology* focusing on new drug administration and cancer care demonstration project G codes before an audience of approximately 40 participants. Highlights of this audio conference included:

- A review of Medicare's 2005 *Physician Fee Schedule* and why practices should use caution basing private payer rates on it since private payers are not likely to accept all the drug administration and demonstration project G codes and their transitional rates.
- A review of drug administration coding and related open questions.
- A review of demonstration project G codes emphasizing the importance of their documentation in the medical record.
- An emphasis on the importance of comprehensive flow sheet (nursing) documentation as key to accurate coding.
- A reminder that drugs are reimbursed at ASP plus 6%, adjusted quarterly.

- A review of the changes in bone marrow biopsy/aspiration coding/billing in 2005.
- A summary of the new, changed, and deleted HCPCS codes.
- A discussion of what 2006 will bring (i.e., new CPT codes, the disappearance of transitional payments, and Medicare competitive acquisition program).
- Some coding FAQs (and As) and case studies.
- The conclusion that evaluation and management services and their optimal documentation are essential.
- A review of practice management survival strategies for 2005.

Download materials from this audio conference at www.anco-online.org/bbuellppt.pdf. This ANCO MMA Audio Conference was supported in part by an educational grant from *Pfizer Oncology*.

ANCO thanks

AMGEN, Berlex Laboratories, biogenIDEc, Cell Therapeutics, Genentech BioOncology, Genomic Health, International Oncology Network, MGI Pharma, Millennium, Novartis Oncology, Oncology Supply, OSI Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer Oncology, Sanofi-Aventis, US Oncology, & Wyeth BioPharma

for supporting clinical and professional education.

ASH Highlights 2004

On Wednesday, February 9th, faculty from *Stanford University* (Steven E. Coutre, M.D., and Jason R. Gotlib, M.D.), *UC Davis* (Joseph M. Tuscano, M.D., and Theodore Wun, M.D.), and *UC San Francisco*

(Thomas G. Martin, III, M.D.) will review the most clinically relevant studies presented at December 2004's meeting in San Diego. Theodore Wun, M.D., will moderate this meeting at the Hotel Nikko, San Francisco. ASCO has accredited this meeting for 3 CEUs. Sponsors and exhibitors for this meeting include *AMGEN, Berlex Laboratories, biogenIDEc, Cell Therapeutics, Genentech BioOncology, Millennium, Novartis Oncology, OSI Pharmaceuticals, and Wyeth BioPharma*. Meeting announcements were mailed in late December.

ASCO's Best of ASCO

On Friday and Saturday, June 17-18th, ASCO brings its annual *Best of ASCO* program to San Francisco's Marriott Hotel. Visit www.asco.org

(and go Meetings and Education/Symposia and Workshops) for additional details. Watch for an announcement of an ANCO event at this meeting in the near future.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

February 15th

Medical Update on Mesothelioma
CancerCare and Alliance for Lung Cancer
Advocacy, Support, and Education
Telephone Education Workshop

February 26-27th

Essentials of Pain Medicine: What You Need to Know on the Front Line of Medicine
American Academy of Pain Medicine
Palm Springs

February 27th-March 2nd

2005 Spring Conference & Meeting
California Hospice Foundation
Oakland

March 5th

When Taking Care Means Taking Charge: 4th Annual Alison Taylor Holbrooks Breast Cancer Conference
Alison Taylor Holbrooks Breast Cancer Research Fund (and others, including ANCO)
San Francisco

March 8th

The Multidisciplinary Approach to the Treatment of Head & Neck Cancer
CancerCare and American Head & Neck Society (and others)
Telephone Education Workshop

March 13-19th

CancerGuides: A Program to Train Integrative Cancer Care Counselors
Center for Mind-Body Medicine
(www.cmbm.org/trainings/CancerGuides/index.htm; 202-966-7338 x222)

March 26th

Each One Reach One: Working Together to Make a Change—What African American Women Need to Know About Breast Cancer
Northern California Cancer Center
Oakland

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 at www.anco-online.org features:

- A general description of the *Association* and its activities.
- ANCO's advocacy information, educational meeting announcements and materials, publications, and WebLog.
- MMA resources.
- Links to affiliated organizations and updated physician, nurse, manager, and patient resources.

The WebLog archives important news for oncology practices posted on an almost daily basis. Among the additional news topics covered at www.anco-online.org/news/index.html are:

- ASCO's e-News, MMA Special Alerts, and MMA Today's
- CMA Updates
- CMS/Medicare Website Updates
- NHIC/Medicare Website Updates

ANCO urges its members to bookmark www.anco-online.org/news/index.html (or subscribe to www.anco-online.org/news/rss.xml using your favorite news reader software; e.g., RssReader for Windows or NetNewsWire for Macintosh) 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 two ListSrvs for the exchange of general/administrative and clinical information and has a group purchasing organization (GPO).

ListSrvs. The COC operates two e-mail based communications systems called ListSrvs. The

COC-ADMIN ListServ is available to all ANCO and MOASC physician members, practice managers and nurses, and Corporate Member representatives. It is a source for the latest *Association* news, special bulletins, legislative reports, and other information impacting oncology practices. To post an item to the COC-ADMIN ListServ, send e-mail to COC-ADMIN@californiaoncology.org.

The COC-CLINICAL ListServ is open only to ANCO and MOASC physician members for the secure exchange of information and ideas between physicians. To post an item to the COC-CLINICAL ListServ, send e-mail to COC-CLINICAL@californiaoncology.org.

All members and their staffs are encouraged to subscribe, participate, and use these ListServes to communicate with colleagues about issues of importance to oncology practices by sending their e-mail addresses to the ANCO office.

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.

ION's 2005 meeting schedule in California (and adjacent states) includes:

- Breast Symposium (San Diego; Feb. 11-13)
- West Coast Nursing Meeting (Las Vegas; Apr. 15-17)
- Lung Symposium (Las Vegas; Apr. 29-May 1)
- Business of Oncology (San Francisco; Jun. 24-26)

ION's Multidisciplinary Approach to the Management of the Prostate Cancer Patient (in cooperation with the *International Urology Network*) takes place in New Orleans on March 18-20th, 2005. Contact Jim Radovic, ION *Strategic Account Manager*, or the ANCO office for additional information/registration for this meeting.

Additional ION meetings (ASH Review, Clinical *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, Tennessee, and Virginia. As an ANCO member, you may enroll in HOLN and benefit from discounted pricing from 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.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Board of Directors

The ANCO *Board of Directors* met on January 26th and teleconferenced on February 3rd to discuss and/or act upon the following issues:

- Annual *Board* meeting with Diamond Level Corporate Members.
- Election of *Secretary* and *Treasurer*.
- Approval of FY2005 budget.
- Final plans for 2005 *Board* retreat.
- National and California legislative/regulatory issues, including MMA, the status of the *California Cancer Political Action Committee*, CAM, SB842, and public and private payer issue updates.
- Clinical and professional education, and *Annual Meeting* plans.
- ANCO's *MMA Practice Preparedness Survey*.

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, 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 March 8th. 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 2004 was published and mailed to all physician members; nurse and office manager contacts; and, Corporate Member representatives last June. Additional copies are available from the ANCO office upon request.

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

ALPHABETICAL DIRECTORY OF PHYSICIAN MEMBERS

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ALPHABETICAL DIRECTORY OF NURSE & OFFICE MANAGER CONTACTS

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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 • Bayer Biologicals
Berlex Laboratories • biogenIDEC
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology
Cell Therapeutics • Chiron Corporation
Genentech BioOncology
Genitope Corporation • Genomic Health
GlaxoSmithKline
International Oncology Network
Lash Group Healthcare Consultants
Ligand Pharmaceuticals • Lilly Oncology
Matrix Oncology • 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-Aventis
Schering-Plough Oncology • SuperGen
US Oncology • Wyeth Oncology*

PhRMA has printed a **directory of patient assistance programs** offered by its member companies that provide free or reduced price medicine to people in need. Download this directory at www.asco.org/asco/downloads/PhRMA_Brochure.pdf.

Institutional Member News

ANCO thanks the following **Institutional Members** for their support:

- *Stanford University Medical Oncology*
- *University of California, Davis, Cancer Center*
- *University of California, San Francisco*

UCSF's **Maximizing Outcomes in Urologic Oncology** takes place in San Francisco on February 11-12th. Visit www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MUR05001 for more information.

UCSF's **Cancer Imaging Update** takes place in San Francisco on March 6-11th. Visit www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=RAD05029 for more information.

The 8th *Annual Northern California Tumor Board at Silverado* will be presented by the *Stanford University School of Medicine* from March 11-13th. Tumor boards on breast, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, head and neck, and thoracic cancers; hematological malignancies and lymphoma; melanoma/sarcoma; 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 beverlyk@stanford.edu.

UCSF's *1st International Symposium on Cancer Metastasis and the Lymphovascular System* takes place in San Francisco on April 28-30th. Visit cme.ucsf.edu/calendar/CourseDetail.asp?CourseNumber=MSU05002 for more information.

UCSF's *Pain Management and End-of-Life Care* takes place in San Francisco on June 9-10th. 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 www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=DMM05513 for more information.

UCD's online CME pain management courses are now available at www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/DistEd/WebEvents/PainEvents.htm. In addition, UCD is offering several **live pain management courses** in California and Hawaii. Visit www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/Confrnce/Confrnce.htm for additional information. The AMA also offers a 12-hour **online CME course in pain management** at www.ama-cmeonline.com.

Membership Dues for 2005

Membership renewal notices for 2005, a membership benefits guide, and 2004 *Annual Report* were mailed to all members last December. Please renew your membership for 2005 as soon as possible. Be sure to take advantage of dues discounts and provide ANCO with the name(s) of office and/or 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 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!