

ANCO FAX News

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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 sent to physician member practices and corporate member contacts. The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on March 18th.

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. A report on the ASCO CPC meeting was published in the last edition of the *ANCO FAX News*. Here is an outline of the issues discussed at the *ACCC State Oncology Society*

**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.

Presidents Retreat:

- **What is Quality and How Do We Measure It?**
- **ACCC/ASCO Updates**
- **Community-Based Delivery to Medicare Patients** reviewed and analyzed Medicare payment rates and summarized 2005 messaging and advocacy plans.
- **Resources for Determining Off-Label Medical Limitations** discussed Medicare's new NCD process for colorectal therapy, *USP DI* and the off-label coverage review process for cancer drugs, and the new NCCN compendia.
- **Oral Drugs in the Physician Office Setting** presented an overview of the Medicare replacement drug demonstration project.
- **State Society Roundtable** discussed state oncology society organizational challenges.
- **ASCO Update on CMS Response to G-coding Concerns** summarized CMS's response to the concerns presented by the state societies via ASCO to CMS.
- **Working With Private Insurers on Breakthrough Therapies** presented local advocacy strategies and processes for off-label indication coverage.
- **ASCO's Quality Oncology Practice Initiative** described one practice's experience with QOPI.

Additional information about these presentations is available from the ANCO office.

ANCO and ASCO continue to work towards ensuring that people with cancer have access to quality cancer care in the community. 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.

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* (December 2004) is available online at www.medicarenhic.com/providers/news/mbr_dec04.pdf. Visit www.medicarenhic.com/whats_new/whats_new.shtml to learn **the latest information** (updated weekly) **from NHIC/Medicare**. Weekly updates are posted on ANCO's WebLog (at www.anco-online.org/news/index.html; under California News).

With regard to **NHIC/Medicare and MMA in California**, here is a summary of recent communications between the carrier and ANCO:

- [NHIC/Medicare is] sorry that providers continue to experience problems with the **demonstration project codes**. [They find] that, while [they] initially experienced some internal problems, most of the problems continue to be in claims submission. In checking samples [provided...NHIC/Medicare] found:
 - ☞ physicians are not referencing the cancer diagnosis code (line diagnosis indicator, or "pointer").
 - ☞ demonstration codes are being submitted on separate claims or only one or two demonstration codes are on the same claim.
 - ☞ physicians are not using the G0357 or G0359 (i.e., chemotherapy drug

administration codes) in conjunction with the demonstration project G codes.

Per CMS's instructions to NHIC/Medicare:

- ☞ [Carriers] shall pay for codes G9021-G9032 if
- ☞ The provider reports three symptom assessment codes (one from each category) for the same date of service on the same claim for which he/she bills for a chemotherapy infusion (G0359) or chemotherapy push (G0357).
- ☞ The diagnosis code reported and referenced is for cancer.

[NHIC/Medicare] will pay the claims if the three demonstration codes are on the same claim and an approved administration code is in history.

[NHIC/Medicare finds] that many of the billing services and clearing houses used are separating the multiple services performed on the same day into six line claims and submitting them. They don't necessarily look to see if the demonstration codes are on the same claim together or with the chemotherapy drug administration codes. [ASCO and CMS have confirmed that billing services are a major source of demonstration project claims processing problems. Systems supported by WebMD seem to be especially bad.]

If you have claims rejected because the services were on separate claims, you must resubmit them as new claims. Items that are denied because they did not reference the cancer diagnosis may be submitted to the appropriate adjustment address as a request for correction, with a copy of the remittance and the correction clearly identified.

- Claims for **G0363 (Irrigation of implanted venous access device; i.e., port flush)** were incorrectly denied through February 15th. G0363 is payable as long as no other physician fee schedule services are performed on the date of service. Per NHIC/Medicare, new claims after February 15th should be paying correctly

and denied claims have been identified and will be paid via mass adjustment in the near future.

- **Abraxane** has not been given an allowance by CMS yet, so physicians will need to submit pricing information for payment consideration. As always, ANCO advises its members to provide NHIC/Medicare with their distributor's selling price in the comment field along with the name of the drug and the dose.
- **Leucovorin** administration can be billed using the chemotherapy administration codes.
- **Vidaza's** administration should be billed using drug administration codes and modifier -76 along with the drug's J-code and modifier -59 with the text "second injection" following the drug description in item 19 or the comments field. If both injections of Vidaza are billed on the same claim, then offices should enter the time each injection is administered to help avoid confusion.

EDUCATION

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

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.) reviewed the most clinically relevant studies presented at December 2004's meeting in San Diego before an audience of approximately 100 physicians, nurses, and others. Theodore Wun, 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 *AMGEN, Berlex Laboratories, biogenIDEC, Cell Therapeutics,*

Genentech BioOncology, Millennium, Novartis Oncology, OSI Pharmaceuticals, and Wyeth BioPharma. Download the presentations at www.anco-online.org/ash.html. (And, download the *SABCS Highlights 2004* presentations at www.anco-online.org/sanantonio.html. Hardcopy of both syllabi are available from the ANCO office.)

SAVE THE DATE

MMA in California & ASCO's Practice Management Curriculum

On Wednesday, March 30th, and Thursday, March 31st, at the San José Fairmont and Sacramento Hyatt Regency, respectively, ANCO will host a day long (9AM to 4PM) meeting discussing *MMA in California & ASCO's Practice Management Curriculum*. Topics to be discussed include strategies to overcome Medicare coding and documentation challenges in 2005,

NHIC/Medicare's perspective on the implementation of MMA in Northern California, and ASCO's *Practice Management Curriculum* which is designed to empower oncology practices with practical strategies for adapting to the changing Medicare

environment, running a successful practice, and considering growth opportunities. ANCO acknowledges the support of *AMGEN, Genentech BioOncology, MGI Pharma, Novartis Oncology, National Oncology Alliance, Oncology Therapeutics Network/Onmark, Pfizer Oncology* in making these meetings possible. A meeting announcement will be mailed in late February.

SAVE THE DATE

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/boa for additional details. Watch for an announcement of an ANCO event at this meeting in the near future.

ANCO thanks

AMGEN, Berlex Laboratories, biogenIDEC,
Cell Therapeutics, Genentech BioOncology,
MGI Pharma, Millennium,
National Oncology Alliance, Novartis Oncology,
Oncology Therapeutics Network/Onmark,
OSI Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer Oncology,
& Wyeth BioPharma

for supporting clinical and professional education.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of interest to ANCO member practices are:

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 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 22nd

Advances in the Treatment of Colorectal Cancer
CancerCare (and others)
Telephone Education Workshop

March 23rd

Medical Update on Pancreatic Cancer
CancerCare (and others)
Telephone Education Workshop

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

March 30th

What's New on the Horizon: Treatment Choices for Men Living with Advanced Prostate Cancer
CancerCare (and others)
Telephone Education Workshop

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 Todays
- 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 ListServes 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.

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

- 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.

NOA's Spring Conference entitled *Survival Strategies in a Changing Environment* will take place on April 16th in Philadelphia. This meeting promises to equip all attendees, including physicians, nurses, and administrators, with practical clinical tools and reimbursement strategies that can easily be implemented in the oncology practice. Topics will include new coding and reimbursement strategies, supportive care assessment and management tools, NOA Compare, and NOA Clinical Guidelines. Registration is available at www.noainc.com.

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* 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 in March. 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):

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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 Oncology
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.

The **Patient Access Network Foundation** is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving access to needed health services for insured patients who cannot afford the out-of-pocket costs associated with their treatment. Visit www.patientaccessnetwork.org for more information.

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

ANCO members can obtain information about our Institutional Member's clinical trials at www.anco-online.org/trials.html. Learn more about California's law requiring the coverage of routine care costs for patients enrolled in clinical trials at

www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/clinical_trials/bigc/ where you can download ANCO's patient education brochure on SB37. The NCI also has a *Clinical Trials Education Series* to help recruit patients available from (800) 4-CANCER or www.cancer.gov/publications.

Stanford seeks participation in a clinical trial for a rare primary cutaneous lymphoma: CD30+ anaplastic large cell lymphoma. The study agent is a monoclonal antibody that targets the CD30 protein. For additional information, contact Sunil Reddy, M.D., *Cutaneous Lymphoma Program, Department of Dermatology, Stanford University Medical Center*, at (650) 736-1234 or (650) 724-5144 or sreddy@stanford.edu. In addition, **Stanford seeks participation (from stage III/IV ovarian cancer patients) in a clinical trial of an investigational cancer treatment (OvaRex® MAb) for ovarian cancer.** For additional information, contact Nelson N.H. Teng, M.D., Ph.D., *Associate Professor and Director, Stanford Gynecologic Oncology* at (650) 724-3155.

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.

Stanford's Advances in Hematology 2005 Symposium takes place in Palo Alto on November 4-5th. Visit hematology.stanford.edu/education/index.html for more information.

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!