

ANCO FAX News

Association of Northern California Oncologists
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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 member practices (via FAX) and Corporate Member contacts (via e-mail). The next regular *ANCO FAX News* will be published on February 10th.

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, ASH, 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). ANCO and the *American Society of Hematology* (ASH) have

agreed to share information with members. We regularly participate with these organizations on matters of national importance to oncology practices.]

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):

- The 2006 *Medicare Physician Fee*

**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 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.

Schedule for California is available at www.medicarehnic.com/cal_prov/fee_sched.shtml#60. The fee schedule continues to reflect a 4.4% reduction pending *Congressional* action. *Congress* adjourned before coming to any agreement about the *Budget Reconciliation Act*, which included a fix (i.e., freezing physician reimbursement at 2005 levels) to the scheduled cut of 4.4% for all physicians. As a result, the cut became effective as of January 1st. Physicians filing claims this month will see the 4.4% cut to services until *Congress* reconvenes and addresses this issue. According to CMS, physicians will not have to resubmit claims if *Congress* approves the bill and will automatically receive retroactive reimbursement. Carriers will have a deadline by which they must issue those reimbursements, and they will issue these payments to physicians in a lump sum.

- **2006 drug administration CPT codes** are available on the *American Medical Association* website (www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/3113.html; select *What's New*). ASCO's cross-reference sheet between the 2006 CPT codes, Medicare's 2005 G-codes, and the 2005 CPT codes for drug administration is available at www.asco.org/asco/downloads/2006_CODING_CROSS_REFERENCE_SHEET_final.pdf. There is no grace period on the use of 2006 CPT codes—they are effective and must be used as of January 1st. This, and ASCO's FAQs for 2006 Drug Administration, is also available via www.anco-online.org/mma.html.

- **HCPCS code additions, changes, and deletions** are accessible via CMS at www.anco-online.org/mma.html. Among the changes are HCPCS codes for darbepoetin alfa and epoetin alfa.

- **2006 drug reimbursement remains at ASP plus 6%. 1Q06 Average Sales Prices (ASP) may be downloaded at** www.cms.hhs.gov/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/02_aspfiles.asp#TopOfPage.

- **The *Competitive Acquisition Program* (CAP) will be implemented on July 1st.** CMS anticipates that the physician election process will take place in early to mid-Spring 2006 (i.e., April 15th through May 30th).

- Regarding the **2006 *Oncology Demonstration Program***, visit www.anco-online.org for the following resources:

- ✓ ASCO's 2006 *Oncology Demonstration Program* Fact Sheet

- ✓ ASCO's 2006 *Oncology Demonstration Program* G Codes

- ✓ ASCO's How to Determine the Impact of the 2006 *Oncology Demonstration Program* on Your Practice

- ✓ ASCO's FAQs on the 2006 *Oncology Demonstration Program* (updated January 5th)

- ✓ ASCO's Disease-Specific Documentation Templates

- ✓ ASCO Treatment Guidelines

- ✓ NCCN Treatment Guidelines

- ✓ CMS's Documentation and Coding Guidelines

- ✓ CMS's Medlearn Matters Article Describing Coding and Billing Requirements

- ✓ CMS Instructions to Carriers

CMS's Fact Sheet is available at www.asco.org/asco/downloads/2006_Chemo_Demo_Factsheet.pdf. ASCO's new webpage dedicated to the 2006 *Oncology Demonstration Program* is at www.asco.org/2006demo.

- Listen to ASCO's **national audio conference on Medicare 2006** at www.asco.org/2006_audiocall.

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. And, join ASCO's **Grassroots Advocacy Network** at www.asco.org/grassroots_survey.

ASH reports:

- MedPAC released its mandated report to Congress on the *Effects of Medicare Payment Changes on Oncology Services*. The report found no evidence of access problems for Medicare beneficiaries. It also found that oncologists responded to payment changes by cutting costs and increasing efficiency, finding new sources of revenue, or selecting more profitable patients. Visit www.medpac.gov to read the full report.

Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (PDPs; MedicareRx; Part D) coverage is effective January 1st. Medicare beneficiaries who are interested in obtaining more information about enrollment, coverage, and more details should contact 800-Medicare (or 800-633-4227), the *Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program* (HICAP) at (800) 434-0222, or visit www.medicare.gov. Additional resources for healthcare professionals are available at new.cms.hhs.gov/MedlearnProducts/23_DrugCoverage.asp

ACCC's Medicare Part D presentation is available at www.accc-cancer.org/edu/whitfieldpresentation.pdf. Download **ACCC's *Choosing Directions: Oncology Reimbursement at the Crossroads*** and the Bayer/Onyx presentation entitled ***Demystify Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefits*** at www.anco-online.org/mma.html. **ASCO's Medicare Part D Fact Sheet** is available at www.asco.org/asco/downloads/fact_sheet_medicare_part_d11-21-05.pdf (or via www.anco-online.org).

ASCO is committed to informing CMS of the problems that patients and practices are having with Medicare Part D. Please contact **ASCO's Cancer Policy and Clinical Affairs Department** at (703) 299-1050 or publicpolicy@asco.org to share your experience with Medicare Part D. CMS has acknowledged some of these problems in an open letter (visit www.cms.hhs.gov/Partnerships/Downloads/PartnerLetter113.pdf).

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.]

Noteware Government Relations represents ANCO (and MOASC) in Sacramento. They report:

- ANCO has been working in concert with the CMA in the hopes of addressing the 5% DHS/MediCal provider rate cut. *Senator Ducheny* has introduced SB912, which would provide appropriate funding for the current year and remove the statute that requires the cut. SB912 must pass out of the *Health Committee* and be approved by both houses. While the bill has bi-partisan support, negotiations must continue with the *Governor's* office before the bill reaches his desk.

ANCO and MOASC have formed the ***California Oncology Political Action Committee*** or CalCancerPAC. ANCO launched fund-raising efforts for CalCancerPAC in December 2005 with its membership dues renewal. CalCancerPAC's goal will be to support candidates sensitive to the needs of oncologists and their patients in California.

CMA and MOASC are organizing meetings on electronic medical records in early 2006. CMA is cosponsoring the *Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society's* conference entitled ***Physicians Adopting Computer Technology*** on March 25th at the *San Francisco Airport Marriot*. Attendees will receive step-by-step guidance on selecting and implementing electronic medical records. Visit www.calphys.org/html/cc057.asp for more information. MOASC's ***Medicare and Private Payor's Focus on Pay-for-Performance Includes Electronic Medical Records: Are You Ready?*** takes place on February 11th at the *Sheraton Fairplex* in Pomona. Visit www.moasc.org for more information.

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.]

NHIC/Medicare published a *Local Coverage Determination* (LCD) for *Oncotype DX* covering the test, with case by case review as needed, for patients with estrogen-receptor positive, node-negative carcinoma of the breast (ICD-9 codes 174.0-174.9). Use CPT code 84999 (unlisted chemistry procedure) to bill for *Oncotype DX*. The ordering physician should indicate that the patient has carcinoma of the breast which is hormone-receptor positive and node-negative. In addition, documentation of the ordering physician prior to ordering the test should indicate that the intention to treat or not treat with adjuvant chemotherapy would be contingent, at least in part, on the results of the test for the individual patient in question.

NHIC/Medicare advises ANCO that the 2006 *Oncology Demonstration Program* is only open to hematologists (specialty 82), medical oncologists (specialty 83), and hematologists/oncologists (specialty 90). It is not open to internists. Some ANCO members may be classified in the NHIC/Medicare system as internists and may have their 2006 claims for the *Oncology Demonstration Program* denied. Physicians may contact NHIC/Medicare Customer Service at (877) 527-6613 to determine how they are classified. Internists may change their specialty by completing the applicable sections of Form 855I. Please be advised that it may take up to 60 days for any changes to be implemented. Verify your NHIC/Medicare specialty classification today!

The *Medicare B Resource* (December 2005) is available online at www.medicarenhic.com/news/provider_news/mbr_dec05.pdf.

Health care providers are required by law to apply for a *National Provider Identifier* (NPI). For complete information, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand. Physicians who are covered by HIPAA will need these standard unique identifiers to submit HIPAA-compliant claims; physicians who are not covered by HIPAA do not have to obtain NPIs,

but may do so if they wish. NPIs will replace health care provider identifiers in use today in standard health care transactions. NPI's are being implemented as follows:

- Beginning January 3rd and through October 1st, systems will accept an existing legacy Medicare number or an NPI as long as it is accompanied by an existing legacy Medicare number.
- Beginning October 2nd, and through May 22nd, 2007, systems will accept an existing legacy Medicare number and/or an NPI.
- Beginning May 23rd, 2007, systems will only accept an NPI.

The most recent *NHIC/Medicare Carrier Advisory Committee* (CAC) meeting took place in Oakland on January 18th. There were no oncology-specific items on the agenda. However, among the general agenda items of most relevance to oncology were:

- Surrogate UPIN #OTH000 will become invalid on April 1st. Providers must use specific UPIN numbers when ordering services such as laboratory, diagnostics, etc.
- California's new DMERC carrier is Noridian.
- Visit www.cms.hhs.gov/MedlearnProducts/20_DocGuide.asp#TopOfPage for evaluation and management documentation guidelines.

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

DHS/MediCal has published (Bulletin 378, January 2006; files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/pubsframe.asp?hurl=/pubsdoco/publications/bulletins/gm/gmbull_e.htm) updated coverage policies for Aranesp (X7493), Epogen (X6836), and Procrit (X7030) effective for dates of service on or after February 1st. Documentation requirements for reimbursement of these three drugs are based on reaching specified target ranges of hematocrit and/or hemoglobin.

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 2005

ANCO's annual *San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium Highlights 2005* took place on Wednesday evening, January 18th, at the *Hotel Nikko* in San Francisco before an audience of approximately 120 physicians, nurses, and others. Faculty from *Stanford* (Robert W. Carlson, M.D.), *UC Davis* (Janice Ryu, M.D.), and *UC San Francisco* (Laura J. Esserman, M.D.) reviewed the clinically most important research results presented at December's *Symposium*. This meeting was moderated by Helen K. Chew, M.D., *UC Davis*, and accredited by ASCO. Visit www.anco-online.org/sabcs.html to download the presentations.

Medicare Reimbursement for Oncology 2006

ANCO's annual Medicare update programs will take place from January 24-26th in San José, Fresno, and San Francisco, respectively. Roberta Buell, M.B.A., Patricia Falconer, M.B.A., and NHIC/Medicare staff will present the latest information on changes in general Medicare reimbursement and Medicare reimbursement for oncology. The speakers will describe these changes as well as provide information on how to analyze their impact on your oncology practice. Visit www.anco-online.org/medicareupdate2006.html for more information and to download a registration form.

Emerging Therapies for Blood Cancer Patients—A Patient Education Program

ANCO is joining the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society* (among others) to bring this year's groundbreaking information from the *American Society of Hematology (ASH) 2005 Annual Meeting* to patients and their caregivers. This free program at the *Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel* in San Francisco takes place on Saturday, January 28th, and includes breakfast and lunch. The faculty includes experts from *University of California, San Francisco, Stanford University, Alta Bates Comprehensive Cancer Center, and California Cancer Care*. For more information please contact Jeremiah Larsen at (866) 450-0669 or visit www.LLS.org/sf/ash. Please note that this is a

patient education program and that ANCO's *ASH Highlights 2005* for healthcare professionals will take place on February 22nd (see below).

ASCO's 2006 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium

ASCO's 2006 *Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Prevention, Diagnosis, and Therapy of GI Cancers* will

be held January 26-28th, in San Francisco. In addition to ASCO, the *Symposium* is sponsored by the *American Gastroenterological Association, the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology, and the Society of Surgical Oncology*. The 2006 *Symposium* will offer educational sessions and abstract presentations focused on a different gastrointestinal disease site, with a day each devoted to esophageal and stomach cancers (Day 1); pancreatic, small bowel and hepatobiliary cancers (Day 2); and colon and rectal cancers (Day 3). General sessions throughout the meeting will focus on prevention, screening, diagnosis; multidisciplinary treatment; translational research; and current controversies in the field. Visit www.asco.org/asco/

ANCO thanks

*AMGEN, APP/Abraxis Oncology,
AstraZeneca,
Bayer Oncology/Onyx Pharmaceuticals,
Genentech BioOncology, Genomic Health,
Lilly Oncology, MGI Pharma
Novartis Oncology,
Onmark/Oncology Therapeutics Network,
Ortho Biotech/Tibotec Therapeutics,
Pfizer Oncology, Roche Oncology,
and Sanofi Aventis Oncology*

for supporting clinical and professional education.

downloads/2006_GI_Program_Announcement_FINAL.pdf for more information and to register.

SAVE THE DATE **ASH Highlights 2005**

ANCO's annual *ASH Highlights 2005* will take place on Wednesday evening, February 22nd at the *Hotel Nikko* in San Francisco. Faculty from *Stanford* (Steven Coutre, M.D., Peter Greenberg, M.D.), *UC Davis* (Joseph Tuscano, M.D.), and *UC San Francisco* (Charles Linker, M.D.) will review the clinically most important research results presented at December's *ASH Annual Meeting*. This meeting will be moderated by Steven Coutre, M.D., *Stanford*, and accredited by ASCO. Meeting announcements and registration forms will be mailed in late January.

ASCO's Prostate Cancer Symposium: A Multidisciplinary Approach

ASCO's *Prostate Cancer Symposium: A Multidisciplinary Approach* will be held February 24-26th, in San Francisco. This three-day *Symposium* is co-sponsored by ASCO, the *American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology* (ASTRO), the *Prostate Cancer Foundation*, and the *Society of Urologic Oncology* (SUO) and is designed for individuals with clinical or research interests in the evaluation and management of prostate cancer. Visit www.asco.org/asco/downloads/Prostate_Program_Announcement_FINAL.pdf for more information and to register.

Additional Education Meetings

Other meetings of possible interest to ANCO member practices are:

January 18th-23rd
Advances in the Understanding and Treatment of Melanoma
Keystone Symposia
Santa Fe, NM

January 24-27th
Medicine Meets Virtual Reality
Aligned Management Associates
Long Beach

January 27th
Progress in the Treatment of Renal Cell Cancer
CancerCare
Telephone Education Workshop

January 29th-February 4th
MindBodySpirit Medicine: The Professional Training Program
Center for Mind-Body Medicine & University of Minnesota
Berkeley

February 8th, March 15th, April 19th, May 17th
Improving Your Chemotherapy Experience
CancerCare
Telephone Education Workshop

February 8-10th
Community Oncology Conference
Washington, DC

February 14-19th
Cancer and Kinases: Lessons from the Clinic
Keystone Symposia
Santa Fe, NM

February 17th-21st
26th Annual Clinical Hematology & Oncology Conference
Scripps Cancer Center
San Diego

February 23rd, June 14th
Living with Lung Cancer
CancerCare
Telephone Education Workshop

February 28th
Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML): Update from the ASH Annual Meeting
CancerCare
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).]

ANCO On-Line

ANCO's independent website at www.anco-online.org features:

- a general description and introduction to the *Association*, its activities, leadership, and membership benefits.
- advocacy information (including ANCO and ASCO MMA resources).
- clinical and professional education meeting announcements and distributed materials.
- survey reports, publications, and WebLog.
- clinical trials information.
- links to affiliated organizations; and, updated physician, nurse, manager, and patient resources.

The WebLog (ANCO News On-Line) posts and archives important news for oncology practices on an almost daily basis. Among the additional news topics covered at www.anco-online.org/news/index.html are:

- ACCC Alerts
- ANCO Meeting Announcements
- ASCO's e-News and Medicare & Quality Care Alerts/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.

ANCO continues to seek ways to make membership more beneficial to the practicing oncologist. The *Board* constantly identifies, reviews, and approves of additional membership benefits. In addition to the benefits derived from its advocacy, educational, and information dissemination activities, ANCO members also benefit from group purchasing activities from a number of vendors. In this vein:

- ANCO is pleased to introduce *Oncology Therapeutic Network's* preferred group purchasing organization, *Onmark*, to its members. *Onmark* shares OTN's longstanding commitment to extend and enhance the lives of cancer

patients and provide the support community oncology practices need to prosper.

- ANCO added *Oncology Pharmaceutical Services (OPS)* to the list of preferred vendors for products and services to the membership in late 2005. An introduction to OPS was FAXed to all member practices in early September 2005. Additional information was included in the 2006 membership renewal mailing. Contact Sean Taylor at (415) 235-4673 or sean.taylor@usoncology.com for more information.

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).

Group Purchasing Organization. The COC GPO has preferred vendor agreements and discounted pricing with *International Oncology Network (ION)/Oncology Supply (OS)*, and *National Oncology Alliance (NOA)/Cardinal* for oncology pharmaceuticals and a wide-range of value-added services.

NOA's *Educating Clinicians to Achieve Treatment Guideline Effectiveness (EDUCATE)* Study looks at how chemotherapy-induced anemia and neutropenia are managed in the community. With the 2006 changes to the Medicare *Oncology Demonstration Program*, adherence to treatment guidelines is of concern. The *EDUCATE Study* promotes evidence-based guidelines for red and white blood cell growth factors and will determine whether continuing education impacts adherence to guidelines and, ultimately, patient outcomes. Benefits of participating in the *EDUCATE Study* include:

- Opportunity to implement a standardized approach to supportive care management
- Continuing education credit

- Revenue (\$6,000 per prescriber plus \$1,000 for designating a practice Champion)

For more information or to download a pre-qualification form, visit www.noainc.com/noa/clinical-services/educate-study.aspx or contact Lyssa Friedman at lfriedman@noainc.com or (415) 526-8132.

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 individual physician members. The **next regularly scheduled ANCO Board of Directors meeting** will take place on January 26th. 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 2005 was published and mailed in June 2005 to all physician members; nurse and office manager contacts; and, Corporate Member representatives. Additional copies are available from the ANCO office upon request. The next *Directory* will be published in June 2006.

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
Bayer Oncology/Onyx Pharmaceuticals
Berlex Laboratories • biogenIDEA
Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology
Cephalon Oncology • Chiron Corporation

Clariant Diagnostics • Enzon Pharmaceuticals
Genentech BioOncology
Genotope Corporation • Genomic Health
GlaxoSmithKline
International Oncology Network
Lash Group Healthcare Consultants
Lilly Oncology • Matrix Oncology
MedImmune Oncology • MGI Pharma
Millennium • National Oncology Alliance
Novartis Oncology
Oncology Pharmaceutical Services
Oncology Supply
Oncology Therapeutics Network • Onmark
Ortho Biotech/Tibotec Therapeutics
OSI Pharmaceuticals • Pfizer Oncology
Pharmion • Roche Oncology
Sanofi Aventis Oncology
Schering-Plough Oncology • SuperGen
Wyeth Oncology

We especially wish to thank and welcome *Clariant Diagnostics* and *Pharmion* as new Corporate Members in 2006.

AMGEN is supporting *Incorporating New Concepts in the Adjuvant Therapy of Breast Cancer into Your Practice*, a series of audio conferences featuring Larry Norton, M.D. The audio conferences commence on February 6th and are being offered on various dates/times through March 17th. Visit www.larrynortoncme.com for additional information and to register.

Genentech BioOncology is supporting *Understanding Community Oncology Coding Guidelines for Optimal Patient Care*, a series of web conferences designed for oncology practice administrators and community oncologists featuring Risë Cleland and Michele Weiss. The web conferences are being offered on various dates/times through February 23rd. Visit www.cmesignup.com/coding2006 for additional information and to register.

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*

For information on **continuing medical education meetings** being organized by our **Institutional Members**, please visit:

- cancer.stanfordhospital.com/newsEvents/events/2006/default
- www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cme/Confrnce/Confrnce.htm
- www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/index.aspx?Display=Date

UCSF's ***Breast Oncology Program Scientific Meeting*** takes place at the Hyatt Regency Resort in Monterey from January 24th through January 25th. Visit www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MMC06007 for more information.

The **8th Annual Northern California Tumor Board at Silverado** will be presented by the *Stanford University School of Medicine* from March 10-12th. Tumor boards on breast, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, gynecological, and thoracic cancers; hematological malignancies and lymphoma; and, supportive and palliative care will be presented by faculty from *Stanford*, *UC Davis*, *UC San Francisco*, and the community. Registration and case submission materials can be downloaded from www.anco-online.org/education.html or obtained from Jennifer Schafer at (650) 724-2288 or schafer@stanford.edu.

UCSF's ***Pain Management and End-of-Life Care*** takes place in San Francisco on June 4-5th. (This program will also be repeated in November.) 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=MDM06P26 for more information.

Publications, Services, & Surveys

The following article on Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) is written by Bobbi Buell and published with her permission in response to increasing questions from ANCO member

practices regarding consolidated billing for SNFs.

Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) are paid on a per discharge basis, sometimes known as Consolidated Billing (CB). Many drugs are included in this payment. As long as the patient is in a SNF, any drug administered in the SNF is considered to be paid by Medicare as part of the SNF service. This means they cannot be paid in your office. Chemotherapy is “carved out” of this rate and can be paid separately. But, supportive care drugs are not carved out. The list of included and “carved out” drugs changes on a quarterly basis and can be found at www.caring4cancer.com. While having the list does not guarantee that you will not be subject to *Consolidated Billing*, it may keep you from billing for drugs that are included in the SNF payment.

In May 2004, Medicare released *Transmittal 183, Change Request 3248* ([visit new.cms.hhs.gov/SNFPPS/LSSNF/list.asp#TopOfPage](http://new.cms.hhs.gov/SNFPPS/LSSNF/list.asp#TopOfPage)) explaining the responsibilities of SNFs with respect to billing for services paid under *Consolidated Billing*. This transmittal puts the proverbial “pedal to the metal”. Specifically:

For any Part A or Part B service that is subject to SNF *Consolidated Billing*, the SNF must either furnish the service directly with its own resources, or obtain the service from an outside entity (such as supplier or practitioner) under an *arrangement* as described in section 1861(w) of the *Social Security Act*. This *arrangement* must constitute a written agreement to reimburse the outside entity for Medicare covered services subject to *Consolidated Billing*.

In addition, there are problems for the SNFs if they forward a patient to you for a service without a contract. The *Transmittal* states:

The SNF cannot function as a mere billing conduit, but must actually exercise professional responsibility and control over the arranged-for service.

This means they should not dump patients on physicians for expensive drugs. But, it also means that, if a physician gives drugs to a SNF patient without a written agreement, there is no

obligation to pay. However, the SNF would be in violation of their participation agreement with Medicare, as “The SNF’s provider agreement includes a specific commitment to comply with requirements of the *Consolidated Billing* provision.”

SNFs are also responsible for informing patients that they may not select a provider for injections that does not have an agreement with the SNF.

In summary, the message here is ***get contracts with SNFs!*** Make a list of the SNFs in your area and send them a cover letter stating their obligation to contract with you. If you do not want to do this, screen your patients (and their caregivers) carefully to ensure that they are not on leave from an SNF. If it turns out that they are, consolidated drugs will have to be obtained through the facility. You may not charge the patient for them as these are considered “paid” services. If SNFs refuse to contract with you, FAX them a copy of the *Transmittal*.

Membership Dues for 2006

Membership renewal notices for 2006 were mailed to all members the week of December 5th, 2005. **Return your 2006 membership dues to ANCO now to ensure your inclusion in *The ANCO Directory 2006*.** Be sure to 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!