

NewsLine



Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology

www.hsc-hawaii.com

March 31, 2009



President's Message

The winter of 2008-09 has been one of the coldest in Hawaiian history both in terms of weather and the economy. Hopefully both will warm up with the coming of spring.

Since the Annual Conference in November the main focus of the Society has been to work with oncologists in the community to draft a new approach to support and expand the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii (CRCH). Several of the Board members sat on a committee working with Dr. Michelle Carbone, the interim Director of CRCH, to develop a strategic plan for cancer research in the State. To briefly summarize, the tasks of the committee were to outline: 1) the current state of cancer care in Hawaii and 2) a plan for future development of the cancer center in partnership with the University, the Medical School, community providers, and most importantly, the major health care systems in Hawaii.

The committee came up with a set of recommendations, which include among others:

- 1) Beginning construction of the new CRCH building as quickly as possible;
- 2) Developing a Clinical Research component for CRCH based on a community matrix model that is utilized in a large number of other NCI Cancer Centers across the country and includes obtaining contractual support from the major stake holders, UH, the medical school, and the health care systems for money, support staff, and space;
- 3) Integrating clinical and basic research efforts across the State by supporting collaborative meetings, conferences, and a cancer-specific IRB to facilitate access to cancer research to all Hawaii residents; and
- 4) Maintaining the Tobacco Tax to fully support the CRCH.

These recommendations have been sent to all major stakeholders, and we await a response.

In January I had the opportunity to attend the ASCO Clinical Practice Committee and ACCC Annual President's Forum. Dr. Bailes gave an update on Health Care Legislation and Policy Outlook for 2009. The new Administration will be working on a Cancer Plan that includes double funding for cancer research, but this will be balanced with reduced Medicare reimbursements, continuing issues with drug coverage, and greater efforts to provide affordable health coverage

for all. A copy of Dr. Bailes' presentation is available from ACCC. The President's Forum allowed for collaboration and discussions among the various State society leaders; it is always an interesting and stimulating vehicle for sharing ideas and discussing common problems. In many ways Hawaii has fewer issues than many other States primarily because of our small size.

A final issue that I would like to bring to the membership's attention is the support of our Society's Corporate Members. The Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology has a number of Corporate Members, listed on our website, whose generous support allows us to continue our mission of advocacy for cancer care in the State as well as provide high quality continuing education events. One of the benefits that our industry partners get for their support is reasonable access to our members to discuss new products, review updates in approved use, and assist with off label use. I want to encourage all members of the Society to make an effort to accommodate periodic meetings with representatives of our industry. I know we are all very busy, but we have enjoyed outstanding Corporate support in the past because of our openness and aloha in working with our supporters. Let us continue this relationship for the future. It will continue to provide significant dividends to HSCO.

On behalf of your Board of Directors, I wish you a great spring. Enjoy your life and please make sure to balance the professional with the personal!

Aloha,
Charles F. Miller, MD, FACP

Drugs in the News from the HSCO Corporate Members

Novartis (Basel, Switzerland) announced that **Gleevec® (imatinib mesylate) tablets** have been approved by the FDA for the post-surgery treatment of adult patients following complete surgical removal of Kit(CD117)-positive gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GIST). About 5,000 to 6,000 new patients are diagnosed with GIST each year in the U.S. For more information, go to: <http://www.novartis oncology.com/products/index.jsp>. (Reprinted from January/February 2009 *Oncology Issues* TOOLS.)

Amgen Inc. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.) announced that the FDA has approved **Nplate™ (romiplostim)**, the first and only platelet producer for the



treatment of thrombocytopenia in splenectomized and non-splenectomized adults with chronic immune thrombocytopenic purpura. Nplate works by raising and sustaining platelet counts, representing a novel approach for the long-term treatment of this chronic disease. For more information, go to: <http://www.amgen.com/>. (Reprinted from November/December 2008 *Oncology Issues* TOOLS.)

HSCO Corporate Members (as of 3/16/09)

<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>
AstraZeneca	Abraxis BioScience
Celgene	Amgen
Genentech	Novartis
Novartis	
sanofi-aventis Oncology	

HR 1392, Fair Drug Reimbursement, Introduced

On March 9, 2009, Representatives Gene Green (D-TX) and Ed Whitfield (R-KY), senior members of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, introduced HR 1392, a bill to change the Average Sales Price (ASP) methodology used by Medicare to set prices for Part B drugs and biologicals to better align drug reimbursement with actual cost.

HR 1392 removes the customary prompt-pay discount extended to wholesalers from ASP. Drug manufacturers are currently required to net out prompt-pay discounts paid to wholesale distributors before reporting ASP figures to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), even though the wholesaler prompt-pay discount is not passed along to physicians. Physician drug reimbursements are lowered by approximately 2 percent by this provision in the ASP calculation.

HR 1392 clarifies this statute by removing “customary prompt-pay discounts extended to wholesalers” from the list of price concessions that reduce ASP. The legislation also conforms prompt-pay discount treatment in the ASP methodology to the Average Manufacturer Price (AMP) methodology used to set reimbursement for pharmacies in the Medicaid program. The broader coalition of community oncology and specialty distribution organizations is working together to advance HR 1392.

ACCC requests your support for HR 1392 by sending an email to your congressman. You can find a template letter at http://www.accc-cancer.org/public_policy/publicpolicy_legislativeaction.asp. Simply enter your zip code to take action.

For more information about
Hawaii Society Of Clinical Oncology
go to: www.hSCO-hawaii.com
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Upcoming HSCO Events— Save the Date

ANNUAL HSCO MEMBERSHIP
CONFERENCE:

Saturday, November 21, 2009;

Waialae Country Club,
Honolulu, HI