

NewsLine



Indiana Medical Oncology Society

www.imos-indiana.com

March 23, 2009



President's Message

In January I had the pleasure of attending ACCC's President's Retreat and ASCO's Clinical Practice Committee meeting in Alexandria, Virginia. One consistent message was stressed during both meetings: our country's new leadership will be proactive and evaluate our services to patients in a different manner than any former administrations. We will need to continue as a unified voice to effect policies that are beneficial to our patients with cancer.

Some of the highlights of these meetings are as follows:

- President Obama and his administration will have difficulty fulfilling some of his campaign promises because of current economic difficulties; however, he plans to double funding for cancer research, provide affordable health coverage for all, and focus on prevention and value. As practitioners, we may have more available research opportunities if his goals come to fruition. We will need to support prevention measures in our communities, evaluate our own practices, and analyze outcomes.
- CMS has awarded the MAC contracts for all regions. Indiana is in Medicare Administrative Contractor Jurisdiction 8 (J8) along with Michigan. Stephen Eberwine, Keith Logie, and Thomas Whittaker already are in contact with our Michigan colleagues and will maintain excellent communication so our two states receive optimal representation for our patients.
- CMS estimates that oncology payments will go down about 1% in 2009. ASCO has expressed concern about these reductions and asked CMS to dampen the impact of the reductions to chemotherapy administration codes while permanent solutions are discussed. ASCO is participating in an AMA survey to collect updated practice expense data, which hopefully will be used to update Medicare payment calculations. It is important for oncologists to participate in this survey.
- A new Medicare provision requires physicians and other suppliers that furnish advanced diagnostic services to meet Medicare accreditation criteria by 2012. These include MRI, CT and PET scans.
- There is a new incentive program for physicians who E-prescribe. There is a 2% incentive payment for electronic prescribing of prescriptions for the period beginning on January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2010. In 2011 and 2012 the incentive

payment drops to 1%, and further reduces to 0.5% in 2013. Providers unsuccessful in reporting E-prescribing quality codes will receive a 1% penalty beginning in 2012. In 2013 and 2014, the penalty will be 1.5% and 2%, respectively.

- CMS has adopted new PQRI Medicare Quality Reporting measures for 2009 that include: plans of care for pain, pain intensity quantified, radiation dose limits to normal tissue, and recording clinical stages for esophageal and lung cancer.



In conclusion, our **Annual Membership Conference will take place in Indianapolis on Friday, October 16**, at the Indianapolis Westin. Mark your calendars now and plan on attending what is always an excellent educational and networking opportunity.

Sincerely,
Mark D. Browning, M.D.

Medicare—NGS: Use of Injectable Medications When an Oral Equivalent Is Available

On March 9, 2009, IMOS members joined Dr. Keith Logie, our Medicare CAC representative, to discuss a recent policy announced by National Government Services (NGS), the new MAC for Indiana. The policy limits coverage of intravenous antiemetics when the oral form of the same medication is available. All IMOS members were invited to participate in the call.

NGS policy states that providers using injectable medications must meet medical necessity requirements for using the drug and the route of administration. Documentation should indicate that the patient was unable to tolerate the oral preparation prior to initiation of its intravenous form; failing a course of an oral antiemetic before starting an intravenous form of the same antiemetic, for example. Instruction regarding this topic is from the Centers for Medicare



& Medicaid Services (CMS) and is a national not a local determination.

Several oncology stakeholder organizations, which concur that this policy is not supported by the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, are challenging the policy. They assert that the CMS coverage decision is not intended to deny coverage of injectable drugs if they are reasonably necessary and are an accepted standard of medical practice for the treatment of certain diseases, such as cancer.

We will keep you posted as other factors arise regarding this issue. Please contact Dr. Logie at keith.logie@usoncology.com about this or any other Medicare issue you want to bring to his attention.

Drugs in the News from the IMOS Corporate Members

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 Nov/Dec 2008 *Oncology Issues* TOOLS.)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Eli Lilly and Company's (Indianapolis, Ind.) **Alimta® (pemetrexed for injection)** for use, in combination with cisplatin, in the first-line treatment of locally advanced and metastatic non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) for patients with nonsquamous histology. Alimta is *not* indicated for treatment of patients with squamous NSCLC. For more information go to: http://www.lillypatientone.com/professional_resources/reimbursement.jsp. (Reprinted from Nov/Dec 2008 *Oncology Issues* TOOLS.)

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). For more information, go to: <http://www.novartisoncology.com/products/index.jsp>. (Reprinted from Jan/Feb 2009 *Oncology Issues* TOOLS.)

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Upcoming IMOS Events Save the Date

ANNUAL IMOS MEMBERSHIP
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Friday, October 16, 2009
Indianapolis Westin