

NewsLine



Minnesota Society of Clinical Oncology (MSCO)

www.msco-minnesota.com

February 25, 2009

President's Message

It is both a challenge and opportunity to become the new president of the Minnesota Society of Clinical Oncology. I would like to thank all of the members for this opportunity. I would especially like to thank Dr. Martin Oken for his diligent work these past two years as our president and for keeping the society moving in a positive direction.

Oncology continues to be an exciting field due to all the new and promising therapies that we have to offer our patients; however, it also is a challenging and sometimes frustrating field from a business point of view. Minnesota is now part of Region 6 (along with Illinois and Wisconsin) of the newly-formed Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) jurisdictions. Our society, along with our CAC representative, Dr. Burt Schwarz, will continue to provide vital input and feedback to the decisions that are made regarding quality oncology care. One excellent way to stay informed of these issues is to become part of the MAC J6 Listserv. To learn how to join the Listserv, see the accompanying article in this *Newsline*.

Some of the current issues that will soon affect our daily care of patients include electronic prescriptions, or E-prescribing, and the reimbursement of PET scans. Both of these will have an impact on reimbursement for patient care, but I think they will also have a positive impact on the quality of care we can offer our patients.

These issues will require all of our input and suggestions, and meeting together twice a year is a great opportunity for reviewing the current debates in our oncology community. Our upcoming conference on March 12 will include excellent information regarding billing for consultations versus new patient visits. Michelle Weiss, a former director of the Michigan Hematology and Oncology Society and former board member of the ACCC, is the scheduled speaker for this presentation. Our medical speaker is a well-

known leader of the Minnesota surgical oncology community, Dr. Tim Sielaff of Abbott Northwestern Hospital, who will give us an overview of the management of liver metastases. It should be a wonderful dinner conference, and I look forward to seeing you all on March 12.

I invite you to become part of this society. I think we offer excellent oncology care in this state, but sharing our common experiences and frustrations can offer all of us opportunities for improvement. If

you have ideas or concerns for our society, please feel free to contact me at Amy.Spomer@parknicollet.com.
Sincerely,
Amy Spomer, MD



J6 MAC Report

Other than the dispute regarding the award of the J6 Medicare Administrative Contractor contract (see accompanying article) that has occurred since my last report to MSCO, the other major Medicare hot topic is *electronic prescribing* or *E-prescribing*. Some of the details are as follows:

- There is a 2% incentive payment for electronic prescribing of prescriptions for the period beginning on January 1, 2009 and ending on December 31, 2010;
- In 2011 and 2012 the incentive payment drops to 1%;
- The incentive is reduced to 0.5% in 2013;
- Providers unsuccessful in reporting E-prescribing quality codes will receive a 1% penalty beginning in 2012. In 2013, the penalty will be 1.5%, and in 2014, it will increase to 2%.

It should also be noted that to use the E-prescribing program, a qualified E-prescribing system must be in place. There are two systems currently available: One is for E-prescribing-only that uses a stand-alone system, and the other is a system that is part of the Electronic Medical Record system that has prescribing functionality. A qualified system must be able to (1) generate a complete medication list of corporate data from pharmacies and benefit managers (if available); (2) select medications and transmit these prescriptions electronically using applicable standards; and (3) warn the prescriber of possible undesirable or unsafe situations. It also must provide information on lower cost, therapy-appropriate alternatives as well as information on formulating medications and patient eligibility, and authorization requirements received electronically from the patient's drug plan.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 612-863-8585 or via email at burton.schwartz@usoncology.com.

Sincerely,
Burton Schwartz, MD



J6 MAC Award Disputed

On January 7, 2009, Noridian was awarded the A/B Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) contract for Jurisdiction 6 (includes IL, MN, WI) and Home Health and Hospice MAC Jurisdiction C. On January 27, 2009, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) notified Noridian that the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) had received a protest of the award, which has resulted in a Stop-Work Order in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations. Noridian anticipates a decision from the GAO on or about May 6, 2009.

Sign Up for MAC J6 Listserv

The MAC J6 listserv is up and running! This listserv was created by the collaborative efforts of the Minnesota Society of Clinical Oncology (MSCO) and the Illinois Medical Oncology Society (IMOS) to enhance communication regarding Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs) and other similar issues related to Medicare Contracting Reform processes and the functioning of the Jurisdiction 6 Part A/ Part B MAC.

The MACJ6Exchange allows MSCO and IMOS members and other oncology professionals in the J6 MAC to send information to all listserv participants at one time and receive information from other section members in their e-mail. It provides an on-going forum for discussion on important topics such as reimbursement issues and reform processes related to the J6 MAC.

Signing up is easy! Go to: <http://lists.ossn-network.net/listmanager/listinfo/macj6exchange>.

Drugs in the News from MSCO's 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 November/December 2008 *Oncology Issues* TOOLS.)

MSCO's Corporate Members (As of 2/2/09)

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Abraxis Bioscience	Amgen
AstraZeneca	Celgene
	Genentech

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MSCO Upcoming 2009 Events

- SPRING MEMBERSHIP DINNER CONFERENCE:
March 12, 5:30-8:30 pm
Minneapolis Marriott City Center
- FALL MEMBERSHIP DINNER CONFERENCE:
TBD

For more information about
Minnesota Society of Clinical Oncology
go to: www.msc-minnesota.com
or call: 301-984-9496, ext. 218