



Nevada Oncology Society

www.nos-nevada.com

August 20, 2009

President's Message

It's hard to believe that summer is coming to an end and that the NOS Membership Conference is right around the corner. This year's Conference will take place at the Peppermill in Reno, NV, on Thursday, October 15.

As is our tradition, we have planned an excellent theme-based program that will feature two outstanding speakers. The first speaker is Robert Allen, MD, who founded The Center for Microsurgical Breast Reconstruction with offices in Charleston, SC, New York City, and New Orleans, LA. He will speak on the subject of "Microsurgical Breast Reconstruction." The second speaker is Helen Chew, MD, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine, Division of Hematology/Oncology at the University of California at Davis Cancer Center, who will provide a **breast cancer update**.

The Reno Membership Conference is the second one NOS has sponsored this year. The first one took place in April at Lawry's Prime Rib in Las Vegas and focused on prostate cancer. Dr. Alex Lesani of Las Vegas Urology presented a session on "Robotic-Assisted Prostate Cancer," and David Beyer, MD from Arizona Oncology Services, presented on "What's Happening in Radiation

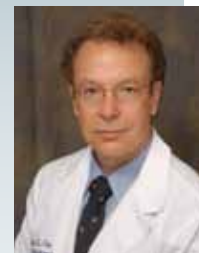
Oncology for Prostate Cancer." Both sessions were excellent and were warmly received by those in attendance.

We will soon be planning the spring Membership Conference. If you have ideas for topics or speakers, please let me know by sending me an email at Dan.Curtis@USOncology.com. I welcome your ideas.

On a final note, in the near future you will be receiving a Call for Nominations in which you will be asked if you or someone you know would like to be placed in nomination for one of positions on the NOS Board of Directors that is expiring this year. That includes the position of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two Trustee positions. Please consider becoming involved in *your* state society.

I hope you will consider attending the Reno Membership Conference—please mark your calendars now!

Sincerely,
Dan Curtis, MD



A Hot, Busy Summer is Predicted for Healthcare

The summer of 2009 is turning out to be one of the busiest for healthcare-related issues that we have seen in a long time. Everything from healthcare reform to regulatory updates to changes in commercial reimbursement is on the radar screen. The following is a short list of some of the hot issues ACCC is working on this summer:

Healthcare Reform

Congress has adjourned for its August recess, but is still actively working on a number of versions of a healthcare reform bill that it hopes to have passed by the end of the year. This is a short timeframe in which to work, and despite the setbacks earlier over the high cost of the reform plans and the specifics surrounding the public plan, Congress is still attempting to abide by this framework. The reform efforts are expected to cover more of the uninsured and underinsured in the US, while at the same time trimming other areas of Medicare in the hope of saving some money.

Other Healthcare-Related Bills

There are a number of other healthcare- and oncology-related bills that are taking a back burner to healthcare reform right now. The Kennedy Cancer Care ALERT Act is one such bill, which will not be addressed until healthcare reform is finished. Efforts are being made to include other bills, such as S. 1221 and H.R. 1392, that would remove the prompt pay discount from the Average Sales Price, in the larger healthcare reform bill, since no stand alone, smaller issue health bill is likely to pass this year outside of the more encompassing healthcare reform bill. We hope that an SGR fix also is

included in healthcare reform, but if not, a separate SGR bill will likely happen by the end of the year.

Regulatory Updates

CMS recently released rules for hospital outpatient departments and the physician fee schedule. ACCC has summarized the rules and these are available to all OSSN State Societies on the ACCC website. Drug and administration reimbursement, evaluation and management reimbursement, and imaging rates are all determined by these rules. The drug and drug administration rates in the Hospital Outpatient Department are proposed to remain about the same, while drug administration may see major cuts in the physician office setting. Medical Oncologists are facing a 6 percent reduction next year, and Radiation Oncologists may face a 19 percent cut. ACCC is working with the State Societies and other advocacy groups to halt these cuts.

Private Payer Challenges

Members are reporting an increase in the number of reimbursement challenges they are facing with private payers. The trend seems to be an increase in the number of prior authorizations required for both medical and radiation oncology. In addition, payers seem to be reducing reimbursement in other areas. Please email me at mfarber@accc-cancer.org about any issues you are having with private payers.

Matthew Farber, MA
Manager, Provider Economics and Public Policy,
ACCC

Interaction with Industry: Different Focus, Increased Value

Although the healthcare landscape is in the midst of change, corporate alliances between the oncology state societies, pharmaceutical companies, and other



support organizations continue to be valuable and mutually beneficial for everyone. The new PhRMA guidelines and current economic conditions have all contributed to investigating new areas of support, reevaluating approaches to funders, and using different techniques to navigate grant preparation and submission, where the process seems to be forever changing and evolving.

NOS continues to revise the way of rethinking about its programs and collaboration with industry partners. We are now renaming the exhibit hall and calling it the Resource Center with the aim that it will become more about education and information and less emphasis on the "selling" of the products.

As a medical association, we need to remind everyone that the interaction with manufacturers provides insight, education about their current products, their pipeline, and their patient assistance programs. Our supporters, in-turn, have the opportunity to tell their story and hopefully help us solve quandaries and provide the best possible cancer options for patients. See you in the Resource Center!

Linda Jackier Schugar
Manager, Corporate Relations
lschugar@accc-cancer.org

Drugs in the News from NOS Corporate Partners*

Novartis (East Hanover, N.J.) announced that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved **Afinitor® (everolimus) tablets** for patients with advanced renal cell carcinoma (RCC) after failure of treatment with Sutent® (sunitinib) or Nexavar® (sorafenib). The drug is intended for those patients with advanced RCC who have already tried another kinase inhibitor, Sutent or Nexavar. For more information, go to: <http://www.afnitor.com/index.jsp?site=PC013498&source=01030&irmasrc=ONCWB0046>. (*Oncology Issues*, May/June 2009)

Genentech Inc. announced that the U.S. FDA has approved **Avastin® (bevacizumab) plus interferon-alfa** for people with metastatic renal cell carcinoma. The approval is based on data from a global, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled Phase III study (AVOREN) of 649 patients with previously untreated metastatic renal cell carcinoma. The study showed patients who received Avastin plus interferon-alfa had a 67 percent increase in progression-free survival (PFS) compared with patients receiving interferon-alfa plus placebo. For more information, go to: <http://www.gene.com/gene/news/press-releases/display.do?method=detail&id=12307>.

New label information on the cancer treatment **Erbix® (cetuximab)** will state there is no evidence the drug works on a minority of colon cancer patients with a specific genetic mutation. Eli Lilly and Company and Bristol-Myers Squibb Company

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Dan L. Curtis, M.D.

announced that the addition to the drug's label will state that studies have not shown that Erbitux helps patients whose tumors have a mutated gene, or biomarker, called *KRAS*. Amgen Inc. announced a similar label change for its cancer drug **Vectibix® (panitumumab)**. For more information, go to: http://www.accc-cancer.org/mediaroom/media_newsfeed.asp#labelchange.

*NOS Corporate Partners (as of 6/30/09)

Gold

Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals/Onyx
Celgene
Novartis Oncology

Silver

Abraxis BioScience
Amgen
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Thank you for the value you add to NOS!

NOS Upcoming 2009 Events

Fall Membership Conference:
Thursday, October 15,
Peppermill, Reno, NV

For more information about
Nevada Oncology Society (NOS)
go to: www.nos-nevada.com
or call: 301-984-9496, ext. 218