

# NewsLine



## Texas Society of Medical Oncology

[www.tsmo-texas.com](http://www.tsmo-texas.com)

August 10, 2009

ONCOLOGY STATE SOCIETY NETWORK

### President's Message

The TSMO Membership Conference will take place at the Marriott Riverwalk in San Antonio on September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. TSMO's conference will be preceded by the annual meeting of the Coalition of Hematology Oncology Practices (CHOP) of the Southwest and a joint TSMO/CHOP reception and dinner on Friday evening.

On Friday afternoon, working sessions of TSMO's Education/Communication Committee and Legislative/Reimbursement Committee will take place. They have been meeting regularly since May, and this is the time for them to receive your input— sharing ideas, describing practice concerns, becoming involved. **These committees are the avenues for action by TSMO on your behalf!** I hope you will consider participating in the committee deliberations and/or joining one of the committees.

#### The Saturday morning program has two objectives:

1) **Education.** A hallmark of TSMO Membership Conferences is the opportunity to hear selected presentations from Fellows in Texas fellowship training programs. These professionals represent the future of our specialty, and I urge you to be in the audience to support them and learn about their various research endeavors.

Dr. Anthony W. Tolcher, Director of Clinical Research at START (South Texas Accelerated Research Therapeutics) in San Antonio, Texas will focus on "Biological Treatments of Cancer, Dr. Tolcher's major interest is testing of new anticancer agents.

2) **Concerns in the Practice of Oncology.** One of the highlights of the program is the opportunity to have a serious and candid conversation with Trailblazer about Medicare policies and procedures. We expect it to be a provocative discussion between the stakeholders in providing cancer care to Medicare patients and paying for these services. Bring your questions and concerns for what promises to be a lively, information-packed, productive session.

Just added to the program is Dan Finch, Legislative Affairs Director for the Texas Medical Association, who will discuss with you the different initiatives proposed in Washington and how they translate to Texas. I know you won't want to miss it!

Finally, Dr. Joseph Bailes will speak on "National Healthcare Reform and Texas State and Local Issues." Given the discussions going on in Washington this summer about new directions in the provision and payment of healthcare services, Dr. Bailes' presentation couldn't be coming at a more appropriate time.

In addition to opportunities for problem solving with your colleagues, learning about cutting-edge issues from the featured speakers, and discussing new treatments with industry partners, you can't beat the Marriott Riverwalk as a conference venue.

Plan on connecting with your colleagues in San Antonio in September. Encourage your partners and

other members of TSMO to attend. Registration is free

See you in San Antonio!

Luis T. Campos, MD  
President, TSMO



P.S. Please remember to complete the TSMO membership survey you received via email and return the TSMO election ballot that has already been faxed to you.

### 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 ACCC and OSSN State Societies from 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@acc-cancer.org](mailto:mfarber@acc-cancer.org) about any issues you are having with private payers.

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

### Interaction with Pharmas: 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.

TSMO 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@acc-cancer.org](mailto:lschugar@acc-cancer.org)

### Drugs in the News from TSMO 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.afinitor.com/index.jsp?site=PC013498&source=01030&irmasrc=ONCWB0046>. (*Oncology Issues*, May/June 2009)

Eli Lilly and Company (Indianapolis, Ind.) announced that the company received a fourth approval from the U.S. FDA for **Alimta®** (pemetrexed for injection). The latest approval is for Alimta as a maintenance therapy for locally advanced or meta-

static non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), specifically for patients with a nonsquamous histology whose disease has not progressed after four cycles of platinum-based first-line chemotherapy. Alimta is not indicated for treatment of patients with squamous cell NSCLC. For more information, go to: <http://www.alimta.com/pat/index.jsp>.

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 announced that the addition to the drug's label will state that studies have not shown that Erbix 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.acc-cancer.org/mediaroom/media\\_newsfeed.asp#labelchange](http://www.acc-cancer.org/mediaroom/media_newsfeed.asp#labelchange).

### \*TSMO Corporate Partners (as of 6/30/09)

*Platinum*  
Amgen

*Gold*  
Abraxis BioScience  
AstraZeneca  
Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals/Onyx  
Celgene  
Genentech  
Lilly Oncology  
Merck & Co  
Novartis Oncology  
sanofi-aventis

*Silver*  
Glaxo SmithKline  
Millennium, The Takeda Oncology Company  
Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

Thank you for the value you add to TSMO!

### Upcoming Events

TSMO Membership Conference:  
Friday-Saturday, September 11-12,  
Marriott Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX

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For more information about  
Texas Society of Medical Oncology (TSMO)  
go to: [www.tsmo-texas.com](http://www.tsmo-texas.com)  
or call: 301-984-9496, ext. 218