THE TOOLS

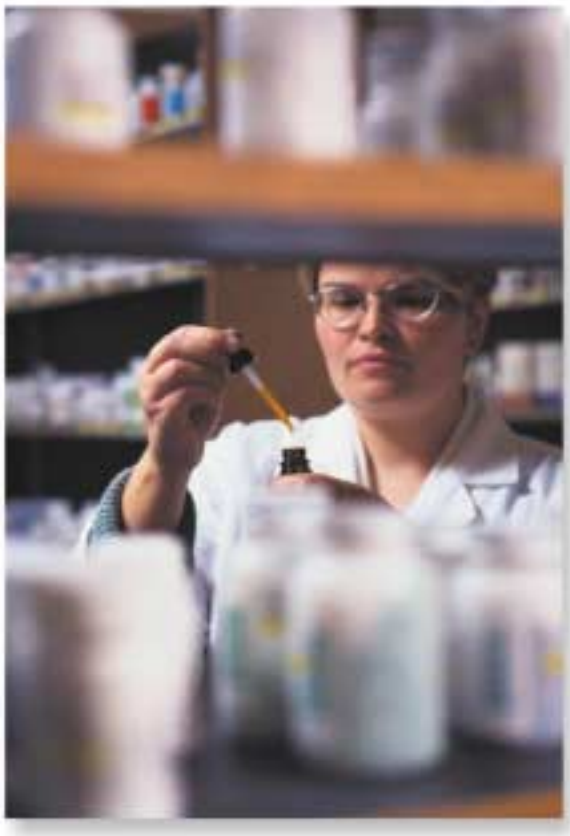
| FROM THE INTERNET |

Check these Out

Online second opinions Cancer patients are increasingly opting for second opinions online, according to a report in the February 2002 issue of the *COR Healthcare Leadership Review*. The new trend involves review by an independent expert of slides, X-rays, tissue samples, and other diagnostics via the Internet. M.D. Anderson's web site, for example, provides downloadable pathology second opinion reviews for nonlocal patients. Another site, FindCancerExperts.com, allows patients to receive a second opinion from a top pathologist for $150 to $300, which is billed directly through the pathologist's facility. Of course, there are legal ramifications to providing second opinions on therapy decisions online, since 33 states exclude physicians licensed out of state from providing consultations across their state lines. The full text is available at *www.corhealth.com/reprint.asp?RN=CH0111001*.

Disaster readiness This hospital disaster readiness advisory, released in November 2001 by the American Hospital Association, summarizes the Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS)—a "Hospital Readiness Template." HEICS sets up a simplified management structure for communications during disasters with 49 predefined management positions. The system clarifies responsibilities and reporting channels, improving communication with other participating area hospitals and emergency responders. Standardized forms and check sheets improve documentation. Visit the site at *www.aha.org/emergency/readiness/maincidentb1107.doc*.

Breast biopsy A new web site devoted entirely to breast biopsy has been launched to provide women, their families, and cancer care professionals with information on what to do if they are faced with a suspicious mammogram or breast abnormality that needs further evaluation. The web site (*www.breastbiopsy.com*) was created by Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc., a Johnson & Johnson company. More than 1.2 million breast biopsies are performed each year.



ILLUSTRATION/PHOTOGRAPH/EYEWIRE

| DRUGS |

Cancer Drugs in the News

■ IDEC Pharmaceuticals Corp. has received FDA approval to market Zevalin™ (ibritumomab tiuxetan), as part of the Zevalin therapeutic regimen for the treatment of relapsed or refractory low-grade, follicular, or transformed B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL), including patients with Rituxan® (rituximab) refractory follicular NHL. The Zevalin therapeutic regimen consists of Rituxan preceding indium-111 Zevalin and followed seven to nine days later by a second infusion of Rituxan prior to yttrium-90 Zevalin. This is the first radioimmunotherapy to receive FDA approval.

■ Atrix Laboratories, Inc., has received FDA approval for Eligard™ 7.5 mg (formerly Leuprogel One-Month Depot), leuprolide acetate for subcutaneous injection for treatment of advanced prostate cancer.

■ The FDA has approved a new drug, nitisinone capsules, to treat hereditary tyrosinemia type I, a rare pediatric disease causing progressive liver failure and liver cancer in young children. Nitisinone is an orphan drug and a product of Swedish Orphan International AB

of Stockholm, Sweden. Nitisinone will be marketed under the name, Orfadin®.

■ Bedford Laboratories announced that it has received FDA approval to market pamidronate disodium injection. This generic product is available in 30mg and 90mg doses and is equivalent to Aredia® from Novartis Pharmaceuticals.

NEW PRODUCTS

■ SeedNet Gold (Galil Medical Ltd., Woburn, Mass.), a cryotherapy system for renal mass cryoablation, has received FDA approval. The SeedNet Gold system offers patients a minimally invasive treatment option for ablation of cancerous kidney masses. The ultra-thin proprietary CryoNeedles may be guided to the targeted region using imaging devices such as ultrasound or MRI, enabling the physician to visualize the freeze-zone in real-time. The SeedNet system had previously been cleared for treatment of prostate cancer using a template technique similar to brachytherapy.

■ The Gemini system (Philips Medical Systems, a division of Royal Philips Electronics) has received 510(k) clearance by the FDA. Gemini is the first combined PET and CT imaging system with an innovative open layout that is unique among combined PET and CT imaging devices. Using Gemini, clinicians can quickly assess both the location and extent of disease in one exam.

■ The Body System™ (Radionics, a unit of Tyco Healthcare Group LP, a division of Tyco International Ltd.) has received clearance for marketing by the FDA. The Body System immobilizes patients undergoing stereotactic radiation therapy treatments and is used in conjunction with Radionics' XPlan™ and IMRT treatment planning system. The Body System makes it possible to reproduce the set-up of fractionated treatments and to align the radiation beam precisely to the tumor volume, effectively treating the tumor while sparing the surrounding tissue.

■ The MammoReader™ (Intelligent Systems Software, Inc. of Boca Raton, Fla.), a computer-aided detection system designed to detect early-stage breast cancer, has received FDA clearance. The FDA approval is for both screening and diagnostic use.

FAST FACTS!

2001 Physician Practice Office Staff Salaries

Title	Avg. Salary
Practice Administrator	$56,389
Director, Patients Accounts	47,500
Business Manager	45,571
Compliance/Audit Specialist	43,073
Reimbursement Manager	42,387
Billing Manager	39,625
Office Manager	37,729
Insurance Manager	37,190
Coding and Reimbursement Specialist	31,924
Director, Medical Records	31,000
Coding Specialist	30,697

Source: Physician Practice Coder Special Report, *2001 Physician Practice Coder National Salary Survey*, March 11, 2002. For the full report, call 877-397-1496.

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