

Highlights of ACCC's 29th Annual National Meeting

Held March 12-15, 2003, in Washington, D.C., ACCC's 29th Annual National Meeting drew 430 attendees from a variety of disciplines in cancer care. Entitled "Striving for Excellence in Challenging Times," the meeting offered roundtable discussions, a Governmental Affairs Forum, and a wide range of topics, including:

- Hospital outpatient reimbursement

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(left) Robert J. Phelan, executive director of Florida Oncology Associates in Jacksonville, shares a moment with another attendee at the meeting.



Eager to exchange ideas are (left) Edythe Garvey, R.N., M.N., A.P.N., OCN[®], director of cancer services at Carson-Tahoe Medical Center, Reno, Nev.; and Dianne Richardson, R.N., OCN[®], associate director, clinical operations, US Oncology, Houston, Tex.



(Top) A congressional visit in the Capitol Hill office of Sen. Olympia J. Snowe (R-Me.) includes (from left) Catherine Finley, Snowe's legislative assistant; Carol Graham-Belliveau, R.N., M.S., OCN[®], oncology PATH leader, York Hospital; and (right) Virginia T. Vaitones, M.S.W., oncology social worker, York Hospital Oncology Center.

(Bottom) Eileen Oldag, executive director of the Lance Armstrong Foundation, accepts the ACCC Annual Achievement Award on behalf of cyclist and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong and the foundation. ACCC Immediate Past President Edward L. Braud, M.D., presented her with the award. According to Oldag, Armstrong said, "I was meant for the long, hard climb."



Participating at a Roundtable session are (left) Millie Pernice, director of Oncology Clinical Operations, The Cancer Institute, Kansas City, Mo.; Pamela Hood, practice manager at Piedmont Oncology Specialists, II, P.L.L.C., Charlotte, N.C.; and Heather Potts, R.N., OCN®, nurse manager also at Piedmont Oncology Specialists.

ACCC's Regional Symposia

May 14, 2003

Nashville, Tenn.

Co-Hosted by the Tennessee Oncology Practice Society
 Radisson Hotel Nashville Airport
 733 Briley Parkway
 For more information, call 615.361.5900

May 20, 2003

Columbus, Ohio

Co-Hosted by the Ohio/West Virginia Hematology
 Oncology Society
 Hyatt on Capitol Square
 75 East State Street
 For more information, call 614.228.1234

June 24, 2003

Dallas, Tex.

Co-Hosted by the Texas Society of Medical Oncology
 The Westin Galleria Dallas
 13340 Dallas Parkway
 For more information, call 972.934.9494

June 25, 2003

Denver, Colo.

Co-Hosted by the Rocky Mountain Oncology Society
 Inverness Hotel and Conference Center
 200 Inverness Drive West
 For more information, call 303.799.5800



(Top) Congressman E. Clay Shaw, Jr. (R-Fla.), a featured speaker at the meeting, addressed the need to increase hospital and physician reimbursement under Medicare.

(Bottom) Meeting with Sen. Dianne Feinstein's (D-Calif.) legislative assistant Charity Bracy (center) are (left) Mariana S-B Lamb, M.S., executive director of Medical Oncology Association of Southern California, Inc. in Upland; and LaDonna Martinez, R.N., OCN®, oncology program coordinator at Doctors Medical Center in Modesto.

- Federal action on average wholesale price (AWP) and physician practice expense under Medicare
- The new single drug pricer (SDP) process in the physician practice
- Pharmacologic and economic issues that surround the use of oral chemotherapy drugs
- Benefits and challenges of incorporating a pharmacy in an office practice setting
- The role of nurses as pharmacists vs. nurses being nurses.

At the Governmental Affairs Forum, Representative Clay Shaw (R-Fla.) spoke about the *Beneficiary Access to Care Act of 2003* (H.R. 1032), which he reintroduced this year. The bill addresses the January 1 cuts in Medicare drug reimbursement and is aimed at protecting patient access to cancer care in the hospital outpatient setting. (See page 6 for more about H.R. 1032.)

Christian Downs, J.D., M.H.A., ACCC's deputy executive director, provided a public policy update on hospital outpatient reimbursement. "Hospitals are being paid about 60 percent of AWP for their drugs, and may not be able to continue providing these drugs," said Downs. While hospitals will probably choose to send cancer patients to physician offices to receive chemotherapy, a significant number of physician offices may also decide that it is too costly for them to administer infusion services to cancer patients. "The question of where these Medicare patients will be able to receive treatment is a troubling one and has ACCC very concerned."

Downs urged attendees to be advocates in their congressional districts and advised them to continue their proactive stance with phone calls, e-mails, or invitations to their congressman to visit their cancer center.

In the physician office setting, Downs said Congress is expected to

act on the AWP issue by May, and the first reductions in drug reimbursement under Medicare might be seen in January 2004. "We still do not know, however, what the percentage of reduction in drug payment will be or how drugs will be paid once AWP is replaced by some other methodology."

Meeting attendees were enthusiastic and positive about the sessions. "You can't afford to miss this meeting as well as the networking that follows the discussions," said Dawn

G. Holcombe, M.B.A., C.M.P.E., A.C.H.E., executive director of the Oncology Network of Connecticut, L.L.C. in South Windsor, Conn.

Denise Carroll, R.N., M.S.N., oncology program director at the Cancer Center at Baptist Hospital East in Louisville, Ky., echoed Holcombe's comments and described the meeting as "comprehensive, having quality speakers, and offering tons of information from experts in their field." Furthermore, she added, "I'm coming back next year." 🗨️

Congratulations!

On March 14, 2003, ACCC's Board of Trustees for 2003-2004 was formally installed. We welcome them all.

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at the Association of Community Cancer Centers' 29th Annual National Meeting