

TOOLS

THE

| DRUGS |

■ Atrix Laboratories, Inc., has received FDA approval for a four-month formulation of **Eligard® 30 mg** (leuprolide acetate for injectable suspension), a palliative hormone treatment for advanced prostate cancer. Eligard 30 mg employs Atrigel®, a technology system that delivers leuprolide acetate subcutaneously. Sanofi-Synthelabo will market the drug.

The FDA first approved Eligard® 7.5 mg in a one-month formulation in January 2002, and in August 2002 a 22.5 mg three-month formulation was approved.

■ Merck and Company, Inc., has received FDA approval for **Emend®** (aprepitant) for use in combination with other anti-nausea and anti-vomiting drugs to prevent the nausea and vomiting side effects of cancer chemotherapy. This drug is the first FDA-approved treatment that prevents the nausea that occurs more than 24 hours after receiving chemotherapy.

■ The U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) recently accepted the off-label use of **Ethyol®** (amifostine) for the treatment of myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS).

| NEW PRODUCTS |

■ **The Alpha IQ** (Instrumentarium Imaging, Milwaukee, Wisc.) is a mammography unit with a patented early compression system that allows technologists to work with the natural mobility of a woman's breast to capture more tissue. According to the company, the result is a more relaxed client, better images, and quicker patient throughput.

■ **PaxScan™ 4030 Medical Digital Imaging System** (Varian Medical Systems, Inc., of Palo Alto, Calif.) has received

510(k) clearance from the FDA. The product is a small, lightweight, portable digital radiography system that combines a computer workstation with imaging software and an amorphous silicon flat-panel image detector. The system is configured for use in general medical diagnosis procedures as well as military field hospitals.

The digitized images can be stored on a CD and sent via a high-speed network or Internet connection to experts in remote locations. The images can even be transferred to the digital dog tags that are currently being evaluated by the U.S. Army for storing soldiers' medical records.

■ **Overbed Privacy Chartholders** from Carstens, Inc., allows storage of low-volume charting that requires privacy and must be kept at the point of care. Made of a durable copolymer material, the top-opening, three-ring, or spring-clip chartholders protect patient records from wear and tear and ensure privacy by concealing the top sheet of the enclosed charts from public view. The chartholder can be attached and removed from a patient bed footboard by using a smooth-edged aluminum overbed attachment.

For more information call 1-800-782-1524 or visit the Carstens e-store at www.carstens.com.

| NEW SOFTWARE |

■ **PrimeLung** (Acculmage Diagnostics Corp., South San Francisco, Calif.) has received FDA 510(k) clearance. PrimeLung is a software system that automates



many features of lung nodule scanning to reduce operator workload. The system can be used to visualize lung nodules on CT scans, measure nodule characteristics, and keep track of the decisions involved in nodule management.

■ **A new version of CAD software for the early detection of breast cancer** (iCAD, Inc., Hudson, N.H.) has been released. The new software increases the overall speed at which the iCAD system digitizes and analyzes groups of mammograms by more than 25 percent, and allows users to automatically print CAD results in hard copy form. There are also flexible options for viewing CAD results on screen and paper, and for enhancing the appearance of CAD markers in the denser, darker areas of the breast.

■ **The COMposer® Communication System** (Hill-Rom, Batesville, Ind.) is an information management system that offers direct, room-to-room communication, instant location of specific staff members, bed status updates that can be sent directly to the nursing station, and activity reports showing patient call

records and response times. Customized management reports and optional modules are also available.

| NEW PUBLICATIONS |

■ The National Cancer Institute has released *Siga adelante: la vida después del tratamiento del cancer*, a publication for Latino cancer survivors and their families.

The book combines the latest information from health professionals with personal anecdotes from Latino cancer survivors on coping with life after cancer treatment. The importance of follow-up care, questions to ask one's health care provider, the importance of family in healing after treatment, and the use of complementary and alternative medicines are highlighted, along with practi-

Fast Facts


Percentage of Change in Health Insurance Premiums from Previous Year, by Plan Type

	1988	1993	1996	2000	2001	2002
Conventional	12.4%	9.1%	1.9%	9.7%	10.1%	12.7%
HMO	8.4%	7.7%	-0.2%	8.1%	11.3%	13.3%
PPO	20.3%	7.2%	1.0%	8.6%	11.7%	12.7%
POS	N/A	5.2%	1.1%	7.7%	9.4%	11.9%
All Plans	12.0%	8.5%	0.8%	8.3%	11.0%	12.7%

Note: Data on premium increases reflect the cost of health insurance premiums for a family of four.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research Educational Trust

cal information on health insurance, legal rights, and workplace issues.

Free copies of *Siga adelante* (publication number P015) may be ordered by calling the NCI

Cancer Information Service at 1.800.4.CANCER (1.800.422.6237). To order online or to view the online versions of these materials, visit: <http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/vida-despues-del-tratamiento>. 

| ON THE INTERNET |

■ www.cmwf.org

Improving health insurance coverage and access to care and improving the quality of health care services are the two national goals of the Commonwealth Fund. A number of publications and studies are available on topics relating to health care quality, health care insurance, Medicare and Medicaid, and managed care, among others.

The Commonwealth Fund offers its publications free of charge. Visitors can place orders online and, in some cases, download publications immediately as PDF files. Topics include:

- "Time for Change: The Hidden Cost of a Fragmented Health Insurance System"
- "Modernizing Medicare Cost-Sharing: Policy Options and Impacts on Beneficiary and Program Expenditures"
- "Stretching Federal Dollars: Policy Trade-Offs in Designing a Medicare Drug Benefit with Limited Resources"
- "Exploring Consumer Perspectives on Good Physician Care: A Summary of Focus Group Results"
- "Teaching Hospitals and Quality of Care: A Review of the Literature."

■ www.cms.hhs.gov/medquest/default.asp

MedQuest Clinical Data Collection Design System is a data abstraction software program created by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide a standard template for creating abstraction questions and for storing abstracted data. Funded by the federal government, MedQuest software can be downloaded free-of-charge and used for data entry system design and data collection purposes. Logging onto the web site will allow viewers to review the tools that MedQuest uses to develop clinical data collection systems. The web site offers an extensive summary of the software components; technical papers, design tutorials, and reference manuals to help users gain familiarity with the development of clinical data abstraction tools; and an interactive FAQ section. 