

State Society Premium Package Update

In April 2005, ACCC's State Society Premium Service will mark its second anniversary. The nearly two-year-old program is available to all ACCC-managed state societies. The program's goals are to help educate practices about oncology-specific reimbursement and office management issues and establish relationships with local payers and Medicare carriers in alliance with their CAC representative.

Three components comprise the package:

■ **A web-based reimbursement hotline.** State society members can ask state-specific reimbursement questions—most often these pertain to coding and billing issues. Answers are sent within 48 hours and are posted to the state society's web site so that all members can benefit from the information.

■ **A state Oncology Advisory Panel.** This panel is established to work with local payers on specific reimbursement issues and helps develop a process for approvals for additional drug indications. The Oncology Advisory Panel consists of three oncologists, one of whom is a member of the Carrier Advisory Committee to Medicare. The Oncology Advisory Panel reviews requests from practices on appropriate uses of drugs for expanded indications.

In one of our active states, coverage indications for three different drugs have been expanded by the Medicare carrier and indications for three different drugs have been expanded by local commercial payers. When we are successful, we share the information with the entire state society membership via blast fax so that all oncologists and their patients can benefit from the expanded coverage decision.

■ **Education seminars.** These forums are provided free of charge



Shawn Glisson, MD, President of the Kentucky Association of Medical Oncologists, welcomed the crowd at the Louisville Regional Oncology Reimbursement Symposium on Nov. 10, 2004.

to state society members. The seminars include an oncology reimbursement program that addresses practical billing issues with a special focus on payer-specific problems and state concerns. The seminar also deals with management and operational issues in an ever-changing reimbursement environment. With ASP and new chemotherapy administration codes being implemented this year, practices have to look closely at costs and sources of revenues to stay in business.

ACCC is active in supporting and establishing state-level oncology organizations. Currently, 27 state oncology societies are ACCC Chapter members, and 14 state oncology societies use ACCC management services.

NCI Asks for Input from ACCC Institutions

NCI is currently revising its *Understanding Cancer* web page. NCI is asking ACCC-member institutions to evaluate the usefulness of this site as a tool for health professionals and science educators. Interested individuals should visit www.ncipoet.org/SBTN/Web/index.htm, and complete the brief survey questionnaire.

ACCC Regional Symposia

On Dec. 16, ACCC wrapped up its 2004 regional symposia in Austin, Tex. Nearly 100 people attended the meeting. Other regional symposia were held in Phoenix, Ariz. (Dec. 14), Minneapolis, Minn. (Nov. 17), and Louisville, Ky. (Nov. 10).

Attendees at the regional symposia heard about the latest regulatory and legislative updates, including the 2005 OPPS rule and the 2005 physician fee schedule. Attendees had the opportunity to ask billing and coding questions from expert presenters. ACCC's free regional symposia are geared towards the multidisciplinary cancer care team, including hospital and practice administrators, oncologists, oncology nurses, hospital pharmacists, coders and billers, and radiation oncology administrators.

Spring 2005 regional symposia are tentatively planned for Louisiana, Washington state, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. Check ACCC's web site (www.accc-cancer.org) for program updates. ■