

# “Mind Your Own Business!”

by Christian Downs, MHA, JD

I was on one of those long plane flights recently and after several hours of reading cancer business materials; my attention was starting to drift. Next to me a very attractive woman was busy working on an important spreadsheet titled, “income.” As I was trying to get a look at what this spreadsheet said, our eyes met, and she snapped, “Mind your own business!”

Embarrassed, I turned away and tried to re-focus on my reading. But my thoughts returned to her words—“*Mind your own business!*” The more I thought about those words, the more “*mind your own business*” seemed like useful advice for those in the business of providing cancer care today.

With all the changes underway in the oncology marketplace, now is truly the time to “*mind your own business.*” As 2005 begins, all practices and programs are going to be dealing with changes in reimbursement, new codes, new demonstration projects, changes in off-label use of drugs, and new advances in treatment.

And those are just the national issues facing the cancer care community. Plenty of local issues will need your attention, too. Consider your relationship with your local hospital, with the physicians, with the carrier who is implementing the national directives, and, of course, with the private insurers unique to your practice.

Still not convinced that you need to “mind your own business”? Read through the articles in this month’s *Oncology Issues*.

In one article, ACCC member HealthEast Cancer Center describes how paying attention to business reduced the hospital’s error rate in revenue charge capture from 88 percent to 5 percent. In another article, Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network in

Pennsylvania writes about measuring physician productivity as one of many ways the cancer program continues to “mind” its business.

ACCC members have the benefit of knowing that they do not have to “mind” their business alone. ACCC is dedicated to helping its membership pay attention to business in a variety of

ways, through educational sessions at our annual meetings, the Center for Provider Education, and our web site ([www.accc-cancer.org](http://www.accc-cancer.org)).

This year’s ACCC Annual Meeting, scheduled for March 9-12, 2005, in Alexandria, Va., will offer attendees sessions on billing and coding for chemotherapy, hospital/physician joint ventures, benchmarking staffing for providers, patient safety, and much more. For new cancer program administrators, a special one-day session is planned to provide a “soup-to-nuts” understanding of the basics of running a cancer program.

ACCC’s Center for Provider Education plans to offer several programs in spring 2005. One program aimed at physician office practices will focus on the new coding changes and how to adopt these changes into your practice. Another practice-oriented program will help you think and act strategically in measuring your practice’s efficiency. For those members in hospital-based cancer programs, ACCC again plans to roll out its award-winning Cancer Program Improvement Project. Information about these programs and more is available at ACCC’s web site [www.accc-cancer.org](http://www.accc-cancer.org).

With all the changes occurring in the oncology marketplace, now is the time to take the advice of that attractive woman sitting next to me on that plane ride—“*Mind your own business!*” Fortunately, ACCC has the tools to help its members with this critical task.

And by the way...that very attractive woman on the plane...was my wife. ■



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