

## ACCC Co-Hosts Annual Presidents' Retreat

**T**he Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) along with the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) hosted the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Oncology Presidents' retreat Jan. 16-17, 2009, in Alexandria, Va. Presidents and representatives from state oncology societies attending the meeting heard speakers discuss key issues in cancer care, including coverage trends from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), e-prescribing and CMS's 2009 e-prescribing Incentive, and the future of clinical trials.

**Healthcare reform.** Kick-off speaker CNN political analyst Amy Holmes briefed attendees on what might be expected in terms of healthcare reform under the new Administration. Holmes said she believes Democrats and Republicans alike will be able to find agreement in some areas, including reducing healthcare costs, tax subsidies for the temporarily unemployed and those temporarily without coverage, and possibly expansion of SCHIP coverage. Both parties need to address healthcare reform in a "serious policy-driven way," Holmes said. Although she did not go into specifics, Ms. Holmes said the new Administration will likely give priority to disease prevention and electronic medical records.

**Emerging coverage trends.** Joseph S. Bailes, MD, chair of ASCO's Government Relations Council, discussed emerging coverage trends from CMS. "There is [a] real push from the MACs [Medicare Administrative Contractors] to have Medicare develop more and more NCDs [National Coverage Decisions]," said Bailes. CMS has released more than 300 NCDs and has more than 150 National Coverage Analyses in its active docket, many of these related to cancer. Contractors have little or no discretion to do anything different in areas covered under NCDs, such as ESAs, PET (FDG), and screen-



CNN's Amy Holmes (center) with ACCC President Ernest Anderson Jr., MS, RPh, (left) and ACCC Executive Director Christian Downs, JD, MHA (right).

Presidents' Retreat attendees heard from speakers on key issues in oncology.



ing for such cancers as colorectal, prostate, cervical, and vaginal. "It is incumbent upon ...those who work with the contractors to watch these NCDs and be engaged," said Bailes.

In terms of Medicare's decision-making process, Bailes sees a possible emerging trend toward favoring "inherent reasonableness" over the "least costly alternative" policy, along with broad support for increasing research on comparative effectiveness of drugs, devices, and technologies. Looking ahead, Bailes sees some "fairly stringent" new regulations for group practice safe harbors on the horizon.

**e-prescribing incentive program.** Among the hot topics during a roundtable discussion was CMS's 2009 e-prescribing Incentive Program. Section 132 of MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008) authorized a new separate incentive program for eligible professionals who are successful e-prescribers as defined by MIPPA. The 2009 e-prescribing Incentive is in addition to Medicare's

ongoing Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) program. In order to participate, eligible professionals must use a "qualified" e-prescribing system. CMS will award an incentive payment of 2 percent of a physician's total Medicare-allowed charges to doctors who use a "qualified" e-prescribing system. However, concerns were raised that none of the current oncology-specific EMRs have an e-prescribing functionality that is compliant with CMS's "qualified" e-prescribing system requirements. Another concern is that not all pharmacies currently accept e-prescribing.

More on the 2009 e-prescribing Incentive Program is available at [www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/2009\\_E-RX\\_Made\\_Simple.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/2009_E-RX_Made_Simple.pdf).

**Oncology practice participation in clinical trials.** Among the trends likely to shape the future of clinical trials are a shift to biologics and globalization, according to speaker Lee S. Scheible of Eli Lilly and Company. More than 250 new drugs are in the

## Save the Dates

### Regional Economic & Management Symposia Friday, April 17, 2009

Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort  
Phoenix, Arizona

This free symposium will be held in conjunction with The Arizona Clinical Oncology Society (TACOS) Membership Conference on April 17-18, 2009.

### ACCC's 26th National Oncology Economics Conference

September 22-25, 2009

Hyatt Regency Minneapolis on Nicollet Mall  
Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

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## ACCC Welcomes its Newest Members

- Cancer Care Northwest, Spokane Valley, Washington  
Delegate Representative: Warren Benincosa, MPH
- The Emory Clinic, Emory Winship Cancer Institute, Atlanta, Georgia  
Delegate Representative: Annie Mullins
- Hutchinson Clinic, Hutchinson Clinic Oncology, Hutchinson, Kansas  
Delegate Representative: Mary Ellen Pianalto, AND, RN, OCN
- Penn State Hersey Cancer Institute, Hershey, Pennsylvania  
Delegate Representative: Kris Reynolds, RN, MSN
- St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital, Jackson, Mississippi  
Delegate Representative: Amy Sharpe
- Stanford Cancer Center, Stanford, California  
Delegate Representative: Maryam Vega
- Sutter Delta Medical Center, Antioch, California  
Delegate Representative: Jeffrey Cronk, MD
- Tanner Medical Center, Roy Richards, Sr. Cancer Center, Carrollton, Georgia  
Delegate Representative: Chad Knight, MSHA
- United General Hospital, North Puget Cancer Center, Sedro Woolley, Washington  
Delegate Representative: Dawn Fucillo

clinical testing pipelines, and with the advent of molecularly targeted therapies, clinical trials are becoming increasingly complex. As clinical trials become more complex, they require recruitment of special populations and creative and adaptive trial design. At the same time, global clinical [trial] service outsourcing is growing and is expected to increase 13 percent annually through 2013. In 2006, four out of ten active FDA-regulated principal investigators were based outside the United States.

Attendees raised concerns that oncology practices can no longer

afford to offer clinical trials and that some are being forced to shut down protocols or not participate at all. To address these concerns, Scheible offered a different approach: a clinical network model managed by a central administrative group with full data management and statistical support services. Still, attendees voiced concerns about the wide variety of study objectives, protocols, and data entry requirements. "Why not have one template for all studies?" asked one physician. "So every time we look at a protocol we know where to find things. Why not have consistency?"

## 6 Pilot Sites Chosen for ACCC's Patient Navigation Program

**ACCC** received more than 100 applications for its educational program, *Cancer Care Patient Navigation: A Call to Action*. Thank you to all the programs that expressed interest. An expert panel reviewed the applications and selected six community cancer centers as pilot sites for the educational program:

- John B. Amos Cancer Center, Columbus, Ga.
- Roper St. Francis Cancer Center, Charleston, S.C.
- Baptist Health Care, Pensacola, Fla.
- Georgetown Hospital System, Georgetown, S.C.
- St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers, Beech Grove, Ind.
- Cookeville Regional Medical Center, Cookeville, Tenn.

Each pilot site will receive a one-day training program on patient navigation conducted by Patricia Strusowski, RN, BS, director of Cancer Care Management at the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center at Christiana Care in Newark, Del.

These onsite training sessions are just one part of this ACCC educational program. Other components include: 1) a session at ACCC's 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, March 18-21, entitled "Successful Implementation of the Navigator Role in Community-based Oncology Programs," 2) a special patient navigation supplement that will mail with the May/June 2009 *Oncology Issues*, 3) a free webinar in summer 2009 that will feature course content developed for the six onsite trainings, and 4) a session at ACCC's 26<sup>th</sup> National Oncology Economics Conference, Sept. 22-25, 2009, which will report on outcomes from the *Cancer Care Patient Navigation: A Call to Action* program.

Meniscus Educational Institute (MEI) partnered with Strusowski and ACCC to develop content for this educational program. CEUs will be available at both meetings (through the University of Kentucky) and for participants of the patient navigation webinar (through MEI).

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