

Happy New Year!

BY BECKY L. DEKAY, MBA



Welcome to 2015! I always

like to think of the New Year as a time for new beginnings, but sometimes my mood falls short. As I write this column, the temperature is

cold outside, which says a lot for Louisiana. The skies are also gray and mostly dreary. It is dark when I get to work in the morning and dark when I leave at night. The festivities of the holidays are behind us, and seemingly there is nothing “to do”—at least not until the end of February when Mardi Gras hits. As my mother used to say, “The best time to have surgery is January or February because you won’t miss anything.”


If you’re thinking similar thoughts going into 2015, you’re in luck! There is a big “to do” for all of us and that’s making sure our cancer programs are adhering to the new Medicare rules that went into effect on January 1. What fun! But at least ACCC works to make understanding what’s new in the 2015 rules a little less painful for us all.

First, starting on page 9 of this *Oncology Issues*, Cindy Parman’s “Compliance” column offers a comprehensive 2015 coding update—for both hospitals and practices. She distills the hundreds of pages that comprise the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) and Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) final rules down to 14 pages, highlighting all of the changes that will affect your cancer program (and your patients). If you have not yet been lucky enough to hear Ms. Parman speak at one of ACCC’s Regional Oncology Reimbursement Meetings, her “Compliance” column is a must read!

Second, you can go to ACCC’s website to access a concise summary of the 2015 HOPPS final rule (www.accc-cancer.org/advocacy/Hospitals.asp) and 2015 PFS final rule (www.accc-cancer.org/advocacy/Physicians.asp). ACCC has compiled new information that radiation oncology providers should pay particular attention to as they face some significant changes in 2015.

Third, as an ACCC member, you can log in and listen to a recording of ACCC’s November 18 members-only conference call on the 2015 OPPS and PFS final rules, which highlights key details in both. A link to the archived call can be found on the webpages referenced above.

Finally, you can start making plans to attend the ACCC 41st Annual Meeting, CANCERSCAPE, March 16-18, in Arlington, Va. With a focus on legislative and regulatory changes and marketplace trends impacting the cancer care landscape—ACCC’s Annual Meeting offers insight on the areas most likely to affect care delivery in the near and long-term future. Plan to attend ACCC’s Capitol Hill Day, which kicks-off the meeting on March 16. The next day, on March 17, hear keynote speaker Charlie Cook, from the Cook Political Report. He will offer his perspective on the policy direction of the current administration, as well as on the 2015 Congressional agenda in light of the mid-term elections. Then, listen to a panel of experts discuss value-based cancer care and provider efforts for integrating value into their programs and practices. And my presidential theme—measuring, demonstrating, and communicating quality to key stakeholders—will be explored through the effective use of Big Data and EHRs. There will also be sessions centered on legal issues that impact care delivery, how to successfully navigate the latest developments in healthcare reform, an update on the 340B Drug Pricing Program, and strategies for minimizing financial toxicity for your cancer patients.

So you see, you do have plenty to focus on during the winter doldrums of January and February. I look forward to seeing many of you in March for ACCC’s Capitol Hill Day and Annual Meeting (www.accc-cancer.org/CANCERSCAPE). Happy New Year to all! 

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