



Reimbursement Assistance: Sources of Help for Oncologists

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REIMBURSEMENT ASSISTANCE: SOURCES OF HELP FOR ONCOLOGISTS

As a service to our readers, *Oncology Issues* will publish a listing of current reimbursement assistance programs once a year. The programs at the following companies were developed for physicians and their office staff.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Bristol Myers Oncology Division.
Reimbursement Assistance Program.
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)872-8718.

Reimbursement assistance for Bristol-Myers' oncology products.

Burroughs Wellcome Company.
Drug information line.
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)443-6763.

Medical or drug information questions. If there is a reimbursement problem for a Burroughs-Wellcome product, the company will provide customers with needed information for third-party payers.

Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc.
Oncoline.
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)443-6676.

Reimbursement support program, biomedical literature searches, and access to databases of the National Cancer Institute (MEDLINE, PDQ, CANCERLIT).

Lederle Laboratories.
Novaline.
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)552-8712.

In Virginia, call collect: (703)391-7821. A reimbursement support program for mitoxantrone HCL (Novantrone). Third-party billing information, including carrier coverage and claim form completion guidelines, procedure coding information, and CPT code information. Assistance with reimbursement problems, including identifying informational requirements of individual carriers, clarifying specific policies' reimbursement limitations, facilitating prior

authorization requests, identifying reasons for claim rejections, and assisting with appeals of denied claims.

Schering Laboratories.
Interferon Reimbursement Information Service (IRIS).

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)521-7157.

Reimbursement assistance, including documentation that the use of Interferon conforms with acceptable medical practice, as well as information about a particular insurance carrier's reimbursement policies for various treatment indications. Now, in addition to providing information services, IRIS has been extended to include the Schering Patient Assistance Program—a program that helps to limit the cost of Intron A for those patients whose expenditures exceed \$9,800 a year.

Interferon Communications Network (ICON).
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)4-INTRON.

A computerized information resource on Interferon and Colony Stimulating Factors that is available only through Schering. ICON consolidates data from an array of scientific sources (published papers, meeting and symposia abstracts, scientific reviews and editorials) into one central database. The ICON database contains information on the different interferons dating from 1980, and on colony stimulating factors from 1987.

TAP Pharmaceuticals Inc.
Reimbursement Hotline.
Monday-Friday, 8:15 a.m.-5 p.m., CST.
(800)223-6285.

A reimbursement information line for Lupron Depot. Practical help to speed Medicare reimbursement. Information on CPT codes, national and local-carrier HCPCS codes, information on payment policies and proper filing of insurance claims, assistance with reimbursement problems. Service is available to both health care professionals and patients.

INFUSION PUMPS

Ivion Corporation.
Reimbursement Assistance.
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., CST.
(800)326-6788.

Reimbursement assistance and support materials for the IntelliJect® multi-channel, programmable external infusion pump and the Ivion hospital pump line.

Medtronic, Inc.
Comprehensive Reimbursement Assistance.
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., CST.
(800)328-0810 x5075.

Prior authorization service for infusion pump implants. CPT coding/billing assistance. DRG grouping assistance and reimbursement levels by geographic location. Full service reimbursement assistance.

Pharmacia Deltec Inc.
Reimbursement Services.
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., CST.
(800)433-5832.

Reimbursement assistance for customers. Prevailing Medicare reimbursement rates by locality; CPT coding and billing guidelines for Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans, and other major payors; liaison with insurers regarding your specific issues; "hands-on" evaluation of your reimbursement needs; billing seminars for branch offices, clinics, and professional associations. Your Pharmacia Deltec representative will arrange a consultation with a reimbursement specialist.

MISCELLANEOUS

Baxter Highland Division.
Gammagard® Immune Globulin Intravenous (Human)
Reimbursement Hotline.
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)548-IGIV. In Washington, DC metropolitan area call (202)637-6696.

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forms, etc.). The committee established a six-month timeframe to allow for renovation of existing space, the procurement of a laminar flow hood, the development of needed administrative support, and the recruitment and training of nursing staff.

Concurrently, Robert Wood Johnson's project director and the program coordinator from Richland met with the medical staffs in both Columbia and Kershaw to negotiate a new relationship. Issues such as patient referrals, when to admit patients to the Kershaw clinic rather than Richland's cancer center, and the role of rural physicians within the clinic were addressed. Because little financial risk was involved, the medical staffs' opted for an informal, rather than a contractual, relationship.

A budget was established by both hospitals. Because existing space and educational programs were utilized, the start-up costs (including staff time) were minimal for each institution. Funding from the private foundation was used to cover capital, staff training, and incidental costs. No new staff were anticipated. Rather, nursing staff from the emergency room and a medical unit were trained. The ability to employ flex staffing was a critical element of cost containment and project feasibility.

Clinic Implementation

The clinic accepted its first patients in December 1989. Although accrual has been slow (a small group of 16 patients, most of whom have cancer, are now being treated at the outreach clinic), patient and family satisfaction with the quality of care at the outreach clinic has been consistently high. Because the clinic is close to home and operates by appointment, there is minimal travel or waiting time and ample individual attention to patients' needs.

Physician satisfaction has also been high. More physicians are participating in the program, and the referral network is growing. Newspaper articles linking the tertiary facility with the community hospital have resulted in image enhancement for both facilities and increased referrals from adjacent communities.

In addition to the chemotherapy service, the Kershaw staff now conducts patient education programs. They have offered several stand-alone programs as well as an "I Can Cope" series which more than 60 local patients have completed.

The outreach clinic has become a

model of a new clinical service that can be successfully replicated by other rural hospitals. In fact, a second rural hospital has been selected to work with Richland Memorial Hospital. This second hospital is slightly larger, it has a more diversified medical staff, and it operates a weekly oncology clinic. As a result, it is anticipated that a broader selection of patients will be managed locally and have access to a wider variety of treatment protocols.

Given the experience gained at the Kershaw site, the planning and development phases have moved rapidly at the second site. Questions and barriers were anticipated and addressed during the initial meeting of the facilities' medical staffs.

In addition, an oncology unit is being established, and an oncologist at a neighboring institution has been appointed as its medical director. When the medical director is not on-site, local internists will manage patients with the aid of a communications system similar to that at the Kershaw facility. Critically ill patients, and those requiring complex treatment protocols, will still be admitted to the Richland Cancer Center.

Summary

This program is a model of specialty clinical linkage between a rural hospital and a tertiary hospital. Both hospitals believe it is a beneficial arrangement that will enhance future relationships. However, the true beneficiaries are the patients, who now have access to specialized cancer treatments in their immediate area; near the support of family and friends at a time when such support is most needed. ■

Catherine D. Harvey is Director, Oncology Services, Grossmont Hospital, LaMesa, CA, and the former Program Coordinator, Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, Richland Memorial Hospital, Columbia, SC.

James R. Walker, Jr. is Project Director, South Carolina Hospital Association, Small and Rural Hospital Project, Columbia, SC.

Reimbursement Assistance

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The hotline responds to coverage, reimbursement, and claims questions from providers who are using Gammagard® IGIV for the prevention of bacterial infections in patients with B-cell chronic lymphocytic leukemia. The hotline is one service of the Gammagard® IGIV reimbursement support program. Billing guides for physicians' offices and hospital outpatient departments provide sample claim forms, sample letters of medical necessity, and other information.

Bristol Myers Squibb Diagnostics Division.

On Call.

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST.
(800)842-4296.

Offers assistance in assigning appropriate CPT-4, HCPCS, and hospital revenue codes for diagnostic services; responds to specific coverage, reimbursement, and claims questions; and distributes support materials including a sample letter of medical necessity, a third-party payment billing guide, and other resources.

Comprehensive Reimbursement Consultants, Inc.

Computerized System to Aid Reimbursement.

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., CST.
(800)326-6788.

Reimbursement consulting and hard copy reports on billing codes and reimbursement rates for medical products, procedures, and drugs. A comprehensive database has been developed and is available on a state-by-state basis. Customized services and reports are available to physicians and industry. ■