



## Letters to the Editor

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## **A Different View of Coding**

As the medical director of a third-party payor for oncology services, I read with interest the article by Cavan Redmond, "Practice Management: Coping With 1990 Coding Revisions," in the Summer issue.

All in all, this was an excellent discussion of the coding problems caused by changes in the 1990 CPT-4 book, but there are some areas I want to take issue with. Insureds and insurers alike are concerned about an issue that was not mentioned in the article—that of honest coding. When a physician makes rounds on a patient, reads the chart, notes lab and other reports, calculates medication doses, and places orders and progress notes on the hospital record, the proper code is 90240 thru 90280, depending on how involved the visit is and whether the physician is a family physician, cardiologist or oncologist. It is dishonest to bill for starting and supervising an IV while making rounds on other patients, when what was provided was subsequent hospital care. There have also been instances where physicians have billed for both a comprehensive hospital visit and administration of chemotherapy for several patients at the same time.

A second issue is "unbundling." There were several statements which alluded to this indirectly, such as "...accurate recording of chemotherapy administration charges produced a 14 percent increase in reimbursement," and reminding all of your readers that pediatric venipuncture codes "...allow for a higher level of reimbursement based on age," when, in fact, 36410 is only appropriate when the venipuncture requires the skill of a physician.

It might be interesting to poll Medicare, Medicaid, and insurers across the country on problems seen "on the other side" when considering these issues.—*Ross L. Egger, M.D., Medical Director, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Indiana, Indianapolis.*

**Editor's Note:** *Oncology Issues* will be performing the type of poll that Dr. Egger has suggested. The results will be published in the Spring 1991 issue. ■

## **CALL FOR PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS**

ACCC Bylaws, adopted March 1984 by the House of Delegates, state: "Bylaws may be amended by the vote or written assent of two-thirds of the Delegate Representatives voting. Written notice of proposed bylaws amendments must be sent to voting members at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which they are to be acted on."

Any delegate representative who wishes to suggest a Bylaws change must inform the ACCC Executive Office of that intent no later than December 1, 1990, for consideration by the House of Delegates in March 1991. All suggested amendments should be sent to the attention of Carol Johnson, Director, ACCC, 11600 Nebel St., Suite 201, Rockville, MD 20852. (301/984-9496)

## **PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS WEEK**

A total of 145 ACCC Delegate Institutions participated in the second annual Prostate Cancer Awareness Week, providing free cancer screening and prostate cancer information to the public. The number of ACCC members participating in the program this year almost tripled over the first annual screening program in which 53 institutions participated in 22 states.

*A volunteer at St. Anthony Regional Oncology Center, Columbus, OH, organizes the patient information forms of the more than 550 men who participated in the center's free prostate cancer screening program.*



According to the Prostate Cancer Education Council, which developed the program, it is estimated that approximately 150,000 men were screened at more than 800 institutions across the nation between September 16 and September 23. During the first year of the program, 14,000 men were screened at 80 institutions. Preliminary reports show that a number of ACCC institutions screened as many as 800 men.

## **CALL FOR OFFICER AND TRUSTEE NOMINATIONS**

The ACCC Nominating Committee is soliciting nominations for the following 1991-1992 board positions:

President-Elect  
Treasurer  
Four Trustee Seats

The term of President-Elect is one year. The Treasurer and Trustee positions are two-year terms. Although nominees are not required to be the voting representative of their institution, they must represent an ACCC Delegate Institution. Letters of nomination should be sent to the ACCC Executive Office, citing the nominees' names and their respective Delegate Institution, along with a copy of their curriculum vitae. Nominations must be received no later than December 1, 1990.

Further information about the