Association News

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ACCC/ONS Working Group Makes Recommendations

The ACCC/ONS Joint Working Group met on November 23, 1992, at the ACCC Executive Offices in Rockville, Maryland. The purpose of the meeting was to determine appropriate joint planning, liaison and reporting mechanisms between the two organizations; review respective strategic plans and determine areas of mutual interest; determine programs and projects where the two organizations may work together.

Participating in the meeting were: Lloyd K. Everson, MD, ACCC Immediate Past President; Luana Lamkin, RN, MPH, Member ACCC Standards Committee and Margaret A. Riley, MN, RN, ACCC Board Member and Chairman, Nursing SIG. Robert T. Clarke, MHA, ACCC President participated in an ex-officio role as did ACCC executive staff members Lee Mortenson and Carol Johnson. The ONS members of the group included: Carol Curtiss, RN, MSN, OCN, ONS President; Juanita Garrison, RN, OCN, ONS Board Member; Barbara Summers, RNCS, MSN, OCN, ONS Administration Committee and ONS Executive Director, Pearl Moore, RN, MN.

The group made the following recommendations to the Board of Trustees which were approved in January for implementation:

1. Maintain a formal liaison relationship between the two organizations with contact points being the ACCC Chairman of the Nursing SIG and the ONS Chairman of the Administration Committee and the Executive Directors for each organization. These individuals will work together to identify projects for potential collaboration throughout the year, such as nursing-specific topics at ACCC's regional meetings.
2. A joint working group with a minimum of three representatives from each organization be appointed annually. Strategic plans from both organizations will be sent to working group members when finalized for the year (ACCC after annual meeting in March and ONS after Congress in June). The group will meet in the fall of each year (location will alternate between Rockville, MD and Pittsburgh, PA) to review both strategic plans, determine areas of mutual interest and identify programs and projects where the two organizations may work together.
3. Governmental Relations and Public Policy Committee Chairmen and staff members for both organizations meet annually (in February) to discuss projects of mutual interest and the potential for collaboration and coordination of efforts.
4. Information on ACCC Nursing SIG and other relevant activities within ACCC will be published in the ONS News and a news item on ONS Administration Committee activities will be published in *Oncology Issues*. From time to time, each organization may approach the other about publication of articles and/or news stories that they feel may be appropriate to the respective readership.
5. ONS President will be invited to participate in ACCC Presidents' Retreat.

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Massachusetts Enacts Off-Label Bill

Massachusetts became the most recent state to enact off-label drug legislation modeled after ACCC's uniform bill. Governor William F. Weld signed Senate Bill 1722 into law on January 14, 1993. The legislation becomes effective on April 14, 1993. Massachusetts is the third state within the past six months to pass such legislation into law.

The bill's sponsor, State Senator Nancy Achin Sullivan, raced the clock in getting the bill passed by the legislature. Senate Bill 1722 was the last official act of the General Court prior to dissolving at midnight on January 5th.

The new law, Chapter 404 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, states that no private insurer may exclude coverage of a drug used for the treatment of cancer on the grounds that the treatment is not indicated on the FDA label if the indication is recognized in one of the three authoritative drug compendia, in the medical literature, or by the Commissioner of Insurance. It also directs the Commissioner to establish a panel of six medical experts to review off-label uses for the treatment of cancer that are not included in any of the compendia or in the medical literature. In such instances, the panel is to advise the Commissioner whether the off-label use is medically appropriate. The six-member panel is composed of three medical oncologists selected by the Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists, one physician selected by the Massachusetts Medical Association, one physician selected by a hospital and medical service corporation (Blue Cross/Blue Shield), and one physician selected by the Massachusetts Association of Health Maintenance Organizations.

Once again, passage of the bill was made possible through ACCC's collaboration with a number of people and organizations. Government affairs representatives of Burroughs Wellcome, Lederle Laboratories, Schering Laboratories, and Bristol-Myers Squibb revived the legislation late last year when it appeared unlikely to pass. ACCC owes a great deal of thanks not only to Senator Sullivan, but ACCC members who contacted their legislators, Dr. Walt Kagan and the membership of the Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists, the Massachusetts Division of the American Cancer Society, and the Massachusetts Medical Society. The ACCC Columbus office worked closely with all of these entities to provide key information and advice throughout the process.

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Five states introduce off-label bills

Indiana, Georgia, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Rhode Island have introduced off-label legislation. Interest also has been expressed by the oncology community in Florida, Oklahoma, Ohio, New Jersey, North Carolina, Maryland, and Utah.

As always, the ACCC Columbus office is available to assist our members in providing information and expert testimony.