



## In the News

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### OIG Report on Cost of Chemotherapy Drugs

The Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services issued a report, "OIG Report on Physician Costs Associated with Chemotherapy Drugs". The report is based on a survey of New York oncology practices to determine the prices paid by physicians for chemotherapy drugs. The limited survey concludes that drugs are available to physicians for less, and in some cases substantially less, than the Red Book average wholesale prices. The report includes several recommendations, including paying for drugs based on surveys of actual acquisition cost and paying for only the amount of drug actually used. The response of the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), which is included in the report, generally views the report's findings as inconclusive because of the small sample involved. The IG, however, is planning a more extensive review of drug acquisition costs.

### Cancer Survivor Leadership Council Develops Health Care Reform Statement

The National Coalition of Cancer Survivorship has put together a Leadership Council which is finalizing a health care reform statement for cancer survivors. Represented on the Council: Susan G. Komen Foundation, Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation, Y-Me, US Too, CancerCare and the National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations. The statement, which is expected to be released this month, proposes a series of recommendations as essential components of a reform package and was discussed at ACCC's Oncology Presidents' Retreat in late January (see related story on page 16).

### FDA Guidelines on Educational Activities

The Food and Drug Administration has issued a "Draft Policy Statement on Industry-Supported Scientific and

Educational Activities" (*Federal Register*, November 1992). The guidelines outline the requirements that should be met if an educational activity receives support from a company. The FDA regulates promotional activities that apply to therapeutic and diagnostic products: human and animal drugs, biological products and medical devices.

ACCC provided comments expressing concern that the guidelines will unnecessarily restrain the free speech of scientists involved in dialogue about research questions. The Association believes that professional organizations are capable of self-monitoring citing peer review committees for presentations or research committees that report their findings.

In response to ACCC's comments, Peter Rheinstein, MD, Director, Medicine Staff, Office of Health Affairs, FDA, stated that the regulations are intended to govern sole sponsor, sole purpose meetings, rather than the multi-purpose, multi-sponsor meetings which concerned the oncology community.

### NTRA Annual Meeting

The National Tumor Registrars Association is holding its annual meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, May 4-7, 1993. The theme of the meeting is, "Education is the Heart of Quality" and sessions are planned on emerging technologies along with an Experts Corner to allow one-on-one contact. Pre-conference sessions include: "ACoS/NTRA Quality Improvement Workshop" and "Life Tables and Survival Statistics". For information contact Karen Phillips, CTR, Program Committee Chairperson at 314/928-5854.

### AOHA Assembly

The Administrators in Oncology/Hematology plan an Assembly in Nashville, TN, May 6-8, 1993. Numerous sessions addressing the issue of meeting the demand to maintain quality care for the oncology/hematology patient are planned. For information contact: W. Robert Cooper, Administrator, Oncology/Hematology Associates of

Central Illinois, 900 Main St., Ste 780, Peoria, IL 61602. Phone: 309/672-5681.

### Bone Marrow Transplants: A Book of Basics for Patients

A new book, published by the BMT Newsletter, is available for patients. The book is written by and for bone marrow transplant patients, with the help of medical specialists from more than 15 different transplant programs throughout the United States.

Written in lay language, the book is designed to augment the information provided to patients by their physicians and BMT centers, and to help them "translate" the medical terminology they typically hear during the BMT experience. A Resource Directory listing organizations that provide information, financial aid and psychological support for BMT patients and their families is included, as well as personal stories about bone marrow transplant patients and survivors.

For information contact: BMT Newsletter, 1985 Spruce Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035. Phone: 708/831-1913, FAX: 708/831-1943.