



Promoting Quality Care and Patient Access

To cite this article: (1996) Promoting Quality Care and Patient Access, *Oncology Issues*, 11:1, 32-32, DOI: [10.1080/10463356.1996.11904593](https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.1996.11904593)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.1996.11904593>



Published online: 18 Oct 2017.



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A FORUM AND SUMMIT

ACCC President Diane Van Ostenberg, B.S., R.N., represented the Association at the First National Congress on Cancer Survivorship, held in Washington, D.C., in November 1995. The Congress brought together leading oncology specialists for the Cancer Leadership Forum, sponsored by the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship. The forum included a review of an NCCS survey on quality cancer care. Small working groups focused on determining criteria for measuring quality cancer care. The resulting criteria were presented to NCI Director Richard D. Klausner, M.D.

Also in November ACCC representatives as well as those from other national oncology associations, cancer centers, patient advocacy organizations, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, and the federal government met in Washington, D.C., at the National Cancer Summit. Their purpose was to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Cancer Act. This one-day conference, sponsored by CaP CURE, the Association for the Cure of Cancer of the Prostate, brought together leading figures in oncology research, policy, and advocacy to evaluate progress in the battle against cancer. Michael Milken, founder of CaP CURE and a prostate cancer survivor, presented his ten-point program for fighting this war, which includes accelerating the approval of new cancer drugs and developing strategies for bringing these drugs more quickly to the marketplace.

CANCER DRGS: WINNERS AND LOSERS

The ninth edition of ACCC's *Cancer DRGs: A Comparative Report on Key Cancer DRGs* is now available. The 94-page monograph

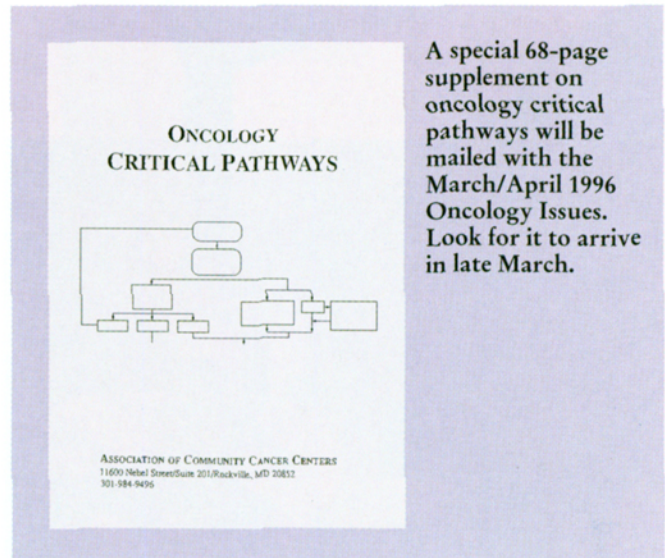
presents cancer-specific information on the costs, charges, and reimbursements associated with the 66 DRGs that compose 50 to 70 percent of all cancer patient discharges.

A shift in understanding cancer service line costs and margins is underway in many U.S. hospitals. Cost accounting software, previously rare, is being installed in most tertiary care facilities. Yet there remains a broad spectrum of cost accounting strategies that do not provide a common ground for interorganizational comparisons. Thus, DRGs continue to be a valuable mechanism for comparisons.

The 1995 report reveals that the most profitable DRG per discharge was DRG 199 (hepatobiliary diagnostic procedure for malignancy), which showed a mean profit of \$874 per discharge. Other profitable DRGs include DRG 276 (\$702 per discharge), DRG 400 (\$386 per discharge), and DRG 273 (\$364 per discharge).

Mean losses per discharge by DRG ranged from \$-29 (DRG 284, minor skin disorders) to \$-1,828 (DRG 401, lymphoma or leukemia with minor operating room procedure).

Each year, *Cancer DRGs* provides a comparative analysis between data reported for this year's edition and data reported in the prior edition for those hospitals that responded to both surveys. A total of 52 hospitals reporting complete data in both surveys are included



A special 68-page supplement on oncology critical pathways will be mailed with the March/April 1996 Oncology Issues. Look for it to arrive in late March.

in this comparative analysis.

In the current survey, the mean loss (total mean costs minus mean reimbursements) was \$-232,741, a significant improvement from \$-366,935 in 1994. Of the 52 hospitals in the comparative group, 12 (23.1 percent) showed institutional profits in this survey, while in the previous survey 14 hospitals (26.9 percent) showed an institutional profit. Nine of the fourteen hospitals that had shown a profit in 1994 continued to show profits in 1995.

The comparative group of hospitals showed a mean per discharge loss of \$-678 per DRG in the current survey compared to a mean per discharge loss of \$-750 per DRG in the prior survey, a decrease in per discharge loss of \$72 (9.6 percent). When profit/loss is calculated for all DRGs, the average loss per discharge dropped from \$-707 in 1994 to \$-672 in 1995, just a 5 percent decrease.

ACCC member institutions have already been mailed their copy of the 1995 *Cancer DRGs*. Additional copies are available for purchase at \$250 per copy for nonmembers/\$225 for members, which includes postage and handling. ■