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To cite this article: (1998) Responding to HCFA's Proposals, *Oncology Issues*, 13:5, 46-47, DOI: [10.1080/10463356.1998.11904782](https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.1998.11904782)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.1998.11904782>



Published online: 18 Oct 2017.



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Responding To HCFA's Proposals

ACCC leadership has begun to coordinate an oncology community response to the Health Care Financing Administration's attempts to capitate oncology drugs with Ambulatory Payment Classifications (APCs). ACCC has been talking with a number of organizations, including the American Hospital Association (AHA), the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). The bottom line is that all these organizations want hospitals to be adequately compensated for chemotherapy and supportive care drugs. Hospitals must be able to compete with private practices. New technology must not be accidentally suppressed by this new system of reimbursement. Containing oncology costs in this way must not be seen by federal agencies as a success for the APC system that should be replicated in physician offices.

In July a joint meeting between ACCC and AHA leadership was held to discuss mutual concerns about APC regulations. The outcome was an agreement by the two organizations to work together to assure that chemotherapy and supportive care drugs are reimbursed in a way that does not put hospitals at a competitive disadvantage and that takes into account the continuing deluge of high-cost, innovative therapies. The proposals for APC payment of chemotherapy based on previous market baskets will not assure payment for rapidly changing technology, a clear problem for hospital-based cancer programs. ACCC agreed to coordinate the oncology community response and work with the pharmaceutical community to develop a broad coalition. In addition,

ACCC and ASCO met with Congressman William M. Thomas (R-Calif.) to discuss problems with the APC regulations. As chairman of the House Ways and Means subcommittee on health, Congressman Thomas held a hearing to examine recent policy decisions by HCFA, including its plan

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to delay implementation of APC changes until it has its Year 2000 issues under control.

On another equally troubling matter, ACCC is working with the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO), the American College of Radiology (ACR), ASCO, ONS, and a number of other organizations to prepare a defense of medical oncology and radiation oncology in the practice expense regulations. ACCC is using consulting staff from its management

firm to develop *pro forma* examples of the impact of lower reimbursement on the viability of radiation oncology centers.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The ACCC Nominating Committee is soliciting nominations for the following 1999-2000 board positions:

- President-Elect
- Treasurer
- Five Board 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, they must represent an ACCC Active member institution, organization, or chapter.

Letters of nomination should be sent to the ACCC Executive Office, citing the nominee's name and his or her respective membership affiliation (institution, organization, or chapter), along with a copy of the curriculum vitae. Nominations must be received no later than December 1, 1998.

For information about the nomination process, contact the ACCC Executive Office at 301-984-9496; Fax: 301-770-1949; e-mail: schan@accc-cancer.org.

CALL FOR AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

Any delegate representative who wishes to suggest a bylaws change must inform the ACCC Executive Office of that intent no later than December 1, 1998, for consideration by the House of Delegates in March 1999. According to the ACCC Bylaws, adopted March 1984 by the House of Delegates, "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."

All suggested amendments should be sent to: ACCC, 11600 Nebel St., Suite 201, Rockville, MD 20852-2557. Phone: 301-984-9496; Fax: 301-770-1949; e-mail: schan@acc-cancer.org.

CLINICAL RESEARCH AWARD

The Association of Community Cancer Centers is soliciting nominations for its annual Clinical Research Award. The 1999 Clinical Research Award will be presented to an individual, or individuals, whose research has significantly and positively impacted the oncology patient, family, and/or community at ACCC's 16th National Oncology Economics Conference in Long Beach, Calif. A special award luncheon is held at the conference to honor the award recipient. The recipient will receive a cash award and a plaque commemorating the event. Previous honorees include Betty Ferrell, R.N., Ph.D., F.A.A.N., Henry Lynch, M.D., Rodger Winn, M.D., Drs. James and Jimmie Holland, E. Donnell Thomas, M.D., and Vincent DeVita, Jr., M.D.

To submit a nomination, please send a letter (minimum two paragraphs; maximum two pages), with your name and telephone number, stating why you believe the individual is qualified to receive this award. Please submit nominations to the ACCC Executive Office, 11600 Nebel Street, Suite 201, Rockville, MD 20852-2557 (Fax: 301-770-1949) no later than November 30, 1998. If you need further information, please contact the ACCC Executive Office at 301-984-9496.

MORE ONCOLOGY SEMINARS ON THE CALENDAR

Six regional oncology symposia have been confirmed for this fall:

- October 7, 1998, Manchester, N.H. (sponsored by Ortho Biotech Inc., Genentech BioOncology, and Eli Lilly and Company)
- October 13, 1998, Austin, Tex. (sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company and Ortho Biotech Inc.)
- October 27, 1998, Tampa, Fla. (sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company and Ortho Biotech Inc.)
- November 17, 1998, Seattle, Wash. (sponsored by Ortho Biotech Inc., Bristol Myers Squibb, and Genentech BioOncology)
- November 19, 1998, Denver, Colo. (sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company and Ortho Biotech Inc.)
- December 1, 1998, New Orleans, La. (sponsored by Genetics Institute and SmithKline Beecham Oncology).

Over the past seven years, ACCC has cosponsored about 100 such meetings. All meetings are free of charge!

These regional oncology symposia are intended to help physicians, hospital administrators, oncology nurses, oncology practice

managers, and oncology social workers deal with the increasingly complex business of serving the needs of cancer patients.

Among this year's topics are: new practice expense regulations that threaten radiation oncology, new outpatient PPS that threaten chemotherapy in hospitals, an update on Stark II regulations affecting oncology practices, the development of a standard oncology benefits package for businesses, and a review of national and state legislation affecting oncology research and treatment. Concurrent sessions include: 1) issues affecting hospital cancer programs and oncology practices and 2) reimbursement issues and working with insurers. A third concurrent session is offered by the Association of Oncology Social Work and focuses on psychosocial issues.

If you reside in or near one of the selected meeting areas, please check your mail for a brochure with meeting agenda and registration form.

Plans are underway for ACCC's 25th Annual National Meeting to be held March 24-27, 1999. The site for our meeting is the Crystal Gateway Marriott, overlooking Washington, D.C., from the Virginia side of the Potomac River. Located in Crystal City/Arlington, Va., this Marriott is a short stroll from the Metro rapid transit system and minutes from Washington, D.C.'s most famous portals of art, culture, dining, shopping, and entertainment. Plus, there's a complimentary shuttle to and from Washington National Airport.



Mark your calendars and plan to attend. You'll find out why so many cancer care professionals are praising our informative, practical, and timely meetings. Look for program details to arrive soon.