



Patient Advocacy and ACCC Initiatives

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PATIENT ADVOCACY AND ACCC INITIATIVES

On September 10, 1998, ACCC welcomed a number of representatives from the leading patient advocacy organizations at its semi-annual Patient Advocacy Meeting in Arlington, Va., sponsored by Ortho Biotech. Representatives hailed from the Association of Oncology Social Work, Cancer Care, Inc., the National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations, the National Cancer Institute, the Oncology Nursing Society, the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation to hear the latest on Stark II, APCs, and other regulatory issues affecting oncology.

ACCC Executive Director Lee Mortenson, D.P.A., also briefed attendees on the status of an ACCC initiative to develop a comprehensive, standard oncology benefits package for the business community. The project was prompted by ACCC's participation in a 1997 national American Cancer Society meeting, which produced a set of ten core ACS recommendations on appropriate oncology benefits. Since then, ACCC has partnered with the Michigan Society of Hematology-Oncology (MSHO) to develop a specific benefits package for use by Michigan Blue Cross/Blue Shield with General Motors. In subsequent discussions, the Michigan Blues asked if the idea could be broadened and made available to their full portfolio of clients.

Working under the aegis of the ACCC Oncology Business Institute, ACCC and MSHO sought input from both providers and the national oncology organizations. MSHO convened a task force comprised of representatives from the university and private

practice settings, with ACCC working in concert with the national oncology leadership. Together these groups built a framework for a benefits package, based on the ACS recommendations. The framework is organized into four groups of policies:

- *Benefit policies.* Using national and state society standards, these policies are part of the benefits for asymptomatic policy holders and cancer patients.
- *Patient policies.* These policies focus on patient needs for information and convenience.
- *Operational policies.* These are policies affecting the provider community; in some cases, they directly impact the quality of care.
- *Data policies.* These policies require data collection to help assist patients and providers to distinguish the oncology standard benefits package from other benefits approaches.

ACCC and the MSHO task force have held collaborative meetings with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan, with the aim of developing a complete oncology benefits package this fall.

A SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS

The Association of Community Cancer Centers extends a special note of thanks to the following corporations for their generous sponsorships at ACCC's 15th Annual Oncology Economics Conference.

- Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology
- Eli Lilly and Company
- Genentech BioOncology
- Genetics Institute
- Hoechst Marion Roussel, Inc.
- Immunex
- Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
- Ortho Biotech Inc.
- Picker International
- Varian Oncology Systems

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ACCC's SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Join us at ACCC's 25th Annual National Meeting, March 24-27, 1999, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott, overlooking Washington, D.C. A noted health care futurist looks both to the promise and threats the next century holds. Experts in the oncology field explore cancer genetics and its future application in community settings, new approaches in radiation oncology, evaluating the cost-effectiveness of a cancer program, and marketing and redesigning a cancer center. Plus, you'll find special events celebrating ACCC's first quarter century, discussion groups, leg-



islative updates, new coding information, and presentation of ACCC's National Achievement Award to Ellen Stovall, executive director of the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship.



James D. Cox, M.D., F.A.C.R., was honored in a special award ceremony September 18, 1998, at the Association of Community Cancer Centers' 15th National Oncology Economics Conference. He received ACCC's Annual Clinical Research Award

for his leadership in promoting multidisciplinary clinical research trials as well as for his own research into curative radiation therapy and its relationship to non-small cell lung cancer. Dr. Cox is professor and head of the Division of Radiation Oncology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Dr. Cox (at center) is shown with Margaret A. Riley, M.N., R.N., C.N.A.A., ACCC president-elect, and Dale E. Fuller, M.D., F.A.C.R., former ACCC board member.

"My experiences with the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG) have confirmed not only the value of clinical research, but also the degree to which physicians are consistently committed to seeking improvements for their patients," said Dr. Cox upon receiving the award. "...The last decade of the 20th century has witnessed an unprecedented number of successful clinical trials in cancer, leukemia, childhood tumors, lymphomas, and carcinomas of the breast, esophagus, lung, head, neck, colon, rectum.... We must be permitted to carry these successes into the 21st century."

Oncology professionals gathered at the ACCC Oncology Reimbursement Symposium held Tuesday, October 13, 1998, in Austin, Tex. The meeting, presented by ACCC and the Texas Society of Medical Oncology, and sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company and Ortho Biotech Inc., was just one of several oncology symposia ACCC presented throughout the country in conjunction with local oncology state societies. More than 100 attendees received an overview of the legislative and regulatory challenges affecting oncology practice at local and national levels. Concurrent sessions offered presentations on issues specific to hospital cancer programs and oncology practices, as well as reimbursement and psychosocial issues.



Kim Calder, M.P.S., associate executive director of the National Alliance of Breast Care Organizations (NABCO), left, and Ellen Coleman, M.S.S.A., director of national programs for Cancer Care, Inc., participated in ACCC's patient advocacy meeting. Patient advocates were briefed on the latest regulatory and legislative issues affecting oncology care delivery for cancer patients.