



FLORIDA SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY FAX BLAST – March 26, 2008

MESSAGE FROM FLASCO PRESIDENT: Robert Cassell, MD

Please note: Third and Final Dues Notices have been sent out to members who have not paid their 2008 Dues. If you believe you have already paid and received one of these notices, please contact the FLASCO Executive Director immediately. Otherwise, if payment is not received by **April 1, 2008**, you will be dropped from FLASCO Membership. I encourage you to continue your FLASCO Membership – it is extremely important that we all remain united! FLASCO serves as the Voice of Oncology in Florida.

CLINICAL PRACTICE COMMITTEE: Thomas Gaddis, MD, Chairman

Here are some urgent coding changes that are effective **APRIL 1, 2008**. (Source: **Bobbi Buell**)

Iron Dextran

CMS has decided to make a HCPCS coding change for second quarter. Code **J1751, Iron Dextran, 50 mg 165 (Infed) and J1752, Iron Dextran 267 (Dexferrum®)** are no longer valid for Medicare payment. They will be replaced by **Q4098, Iron Dextran, 50 mg**. Again, this is effective April 1, 2008. **Check with non-Medicare payers to ascertain which code(s) they will use after March 31**. Quarterly changes are not always picked up by private payers.

New IVIG Code

In the same set of codes, Medicare also established another new code--**J4097, INJECTION, IMMUNE GLOBULIN (PRIVIGEN), INTRAVENOUS, NON-LYOPHILIZED (E.G., LIQUID), 500 MG**. Add this to your charge documents, if you use this drug.

For the HCPCS Quarterly Update, please see:

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HCPCSReleaseCodeSets/02_HCPCS_Quarterly_Update.asp#TopOfPage

RAC Audits in Florida

The ASCO Cancer Policy and Clinical Affairs staff has received a number of follow-up calls from oncology providers relating to the Florida recovery audit contractor (RAC) audits, conducted by HealthDataInsights, Inc. (HDI) that centered on drug administration add-on codes in 200.

HDI told ASCO that it would send notifications out to providers that audits containing certain G-codes have been rescinded. ASCO staff recently learned that providers would not receive notification if a demand letter requesting payment was not issued.

If you have an outstanding RAC audit on any of the following codes: G0348, G0350, G0360 or G0362, call HDI at 888.700.3282, ext. 1141, to check the status of the audit. Please note that you need to have the audit number available for HDI staff to verify the status.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Erin Dunbar, MD, Chairman

This year FLASCO is taking a very active role in both the State and Federal Legislative arenas. There are several issues that can dramatically affect the practice of oncology. Last week Michelle Smith Flowers from OMF and I made a visit to Tallahassee and met with staff in the Governor's Office, Senate and House Committee Members and Staff along with others regarding the pharmacy license issue. An Alert along with other documents and sample letters have been sent to you from the FLASCO Office asking you to take specific actions – I strongly encourage each and every one of you to contact your Legislators on this issue.

In addition on the Federal level we have been addressing the Community Cancer Care Preservation Act of 2007 (S.1750 and H.R. 1190). Dr. Cassell has sent a letter on behalf of FLASCO to both of our US Senators and all of our Florida

Congressmen who have not already signed onto the House Bill. In the next few days you will be receiving specifics on this issue and will be asked to contact you Congressman and our two Florida Senators.

DRUG UPDATES:

Cephalon Oncology Receives FDA Approval for TREANDA, a Novel Chemotherapy for Chronic

Lymphocytic Leukemia - Cephalon, Inc. announced last week that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved TREANDA[®] (bendamustine hydrochloride) for Injection for the treatment of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). TREANDA has been granted orphan drug status by the FDA for the treatment of CLL. The orphan drug designation will provide marketing exclusivity in this indication until March 2015. It is anticipated the injectable product will be available in the US in April. The company is also seeking approval for Treanda as a treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, with a decision from the FDA expected in October.

Celgene's Amrubicin granted FDA orphan drug status

Celgene announced Tuesday that the FDA granted orphan drug status to Amrubicin for the treatment of small-cell lung cancer. The topoisomerase II inhibitor is being studied as a single agent, as well as in combination with anti-cancer therapies, for use in solid tumours. The drug's developer, Dainippon Sumitomo, licensed the US and EU rights to Pharmion, which was acquired by Celgene in 2008

CMS UPDATES:

The revised *Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Fact Sheet* (January 2008), which provides general information about the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, is now available in print format from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services **Medicare Learning Network**. To place your order, visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mlngeninfo/>, scroll down to "Related Links Inside CMS" and select "MLN Product Ordering Page."

ASH UPDATES:

Radioimmunotherapy Agents: Controversy over Medicare Reimbursement Continues

ASH attended the March 5 CMS Advisory Panel on Ambulatory Payment Classification Groups (APC) on pricing policy for the radioimmunotherapy agents of Zevalin and Bexxar. The legislative language in the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007, has been interpreted by CMS in a way that does not cover the full costs of treatment and therefore, facilities may be reluctant to provide this treatment for non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Presentations from Dr. Robin Joyce of Harvard Medical School and from Glaxo-Smith Kline consistently reported that this class of drugs is under-reimbursed, that inadequate payment may jeopardize access to the therapy and that all components of the therapeutic regimen should be included in the reimbursement policy. The APC concluded that it will reevaluate the payment for this class of drugs by reviewing hospital claims data and information from stakeholders.

ASH has been actively involved in this issue, recently assisting the Senate Finance Committee in a letter to CMS Acting Administrator Weems in which it requested CMS to reconsider its interpretation of the legislation and reimburse for the entire therapeutic regimen of using the payment policy that was in effect prior to January 1, 2008. ASH has also expressed its concern in a letter to CMS and a letter to the Senate Finance Committee ASH will continue to be involved on a resolution of this issue, through either the regulatory or legislative route and will keep members informed.

ODAC Recommends Approval of Romiplostim for ITP

On March 12, presented its biologic license application for Nplate (romiplostim) to ODAC. ODAC voted that the clinical data demonstrate a favorable risk-benefit profile for certain patients with chronic idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP). However, ODAC also requested a risk management program, due to the small number of patients and relatively short timeframe involved in the cited studies. The details of a risk management program will need to be determined.

The ASH guidelines on ITP was extensively cited in the discussions. The Food and Drug Administration will review the ODAC recommendations and render its decision. ASH will keep the practice community apprised regarding FDA's decision on this application

ACADEMIC CENTERS/INSTITUTIONS NEWS & UPDATES:

Moffitt Cancer Center Hematology Active Clinical Trials

The Moffitt Cancer Center has provided FLASCO with a list of Active Hematology Clinical Trials currently being conducted at Moffitt. If you are interested in participating and would like to have a list of the Malignant Hematology Clinical Trials, please contact the FLASCO Executive Director.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

New Directions in Quality Audio Conference

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:00 PM (EDT) - This educational series brought to you by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation is a 45- minute session – the first in a series – it will address how employers are exploring alternative models of benefit design that promote shared decision making and gain more value from dollars spent on employee health benefits. The presentation will focus on trends in consumer-directed healthcare, disease management, prevention and wellness and value-based insurance design. **To register:** Copy and past the following into your browser:
http://panastream.com/New_Directions_in_Quality/Registration.php

DISCLAIMER: FLASCO has not reviewed this program and “any views presented are not the views of FLASCO”

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP/SPONSORSHIP: (January 1 – December 31, 2008)

FLASCO Members extends a big thanks to all of our 2008 Corporate Members/Sponsors

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FLASCO EVENTS:

November 7-8, 2008 – FLASCO Fall Meeting – Tampa Airport Marriott Hotel

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