

ASCO CAC Network E-News

September 2007 Issue

Ninth Annual Oncology/Hematology CAC Network Meeting Highlights

The Ninth Annual CAC Network Meeting was held July 13-14, 2007, in Washington, D.C. Former CMS administrator, Mark McClellan, MD, PhD, was the keynote speaker. He provided his perspective of where healthcare policy decision-makers are headed in the aspects of quality, pay for performance, and coverage with evidence development.

Speaker presentations are now available [online](#) for your reference..

Local Coverage News

New A/B MAC contract awarded to Trailblazer Health Enterprises (Trailblazer)

On August 2, 2007, CMS announced that it had awarded the Jurisdiction 4 (J4) A/B MAC contract to TrailBlazer Health Enterprises (TrailBlazer). Refer to CMS's [official announcement](#) for more details.

TrailBlazer has immediately begun their implementation activities, and will assume full responsibility for the work no later than Spring 2008. The newly-created J4 A/B MAC will be responsible for the local coverage policy and claims-processing for the states of Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Refer to the [A/B MAC jurisdiction map](#) for specific state jurisdiction. You can also refer to the CMS Jurisdiction 4 Contracting Reform [Q & A article](#) for more details.

New A/B MAC contract awarded to Wisconsin Physician Services (WPS)

On September 5, 2007, CMS made another official announcement that Wisconsin Physicians Service Health Insurance Corporation (WPS) has been awarded the contract for the combined administration of Part A and Part B Medicare fee-for-service claims in Jurisdiction 5 (J5). The states included in Jurisdiction 5 are Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Refer to CMS's [official announcement](#) for more details. You can also refer to the CMS Jurisdiction 5 Contracting Reform [Q & A article](#) for more information.

Draft LCD for Erythropoiesis Stimulating Agents (DL23723)

Noridian Administrative Services (NAS) has issued a [Draft Proposed Local Coverage Determination](#), or LCD, for Erythropoiesis Stimulating Agents. The start date of the comment period was September 5, 2007, and the end date of the comment period will be December 3, 2007. The draft LCD will be presented for discussion at the NAS Medicare Part B Open Public Meeting to be held on September 11, 2007, and also at the following Carrier Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings:

- Alaska – September 20, 2007
- Colorado – October 11, 2007
- Hawaii – October 19, 2007

- Iowa – October 4, 2007
- Nevada – October 11, 2007
- Oregon – October 13, 2007
- Washington – October 1, 2007

National Coverage News

ASCO Requests CMS to Reconsider the ESA National Coverage Decision

On July 30, 2007, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published and made effective a [Medicare National Coverage Decision \(NCD\)](#) on the use of Erythropoiesis Stimulating Agents (ESAs) in cancer and related neoplastic conditions. On August 30, ASCO filed a [formal request](#) for consideration of the NCD with CMS. ASCO has also filed [recommended substitute language](#) for the NCD. This follows a series of letters and meetings outlining concerns with the policy. The letter outlined the following reasons that warrant reopening the policy:

- The clinical studies supporting FDA's approval of ESAs did not include stopping administration of the ESAs when the patient's hemoglobin exceeded 10 g/dL. There are no clinical studies demonstrating that the NCD rules for administering ESAs result in their safe and effective use. CMS's implied conclusion that the NCD provides for safe and effective therapy is based on a misinterpretation of the clinical evidence.
- The NCD assumed that additional blood transfusions will not be required as a consequence of the new policy, since it misinterpreted existing evidence and based its policy on evidence that is unclear. In addition, the NCD did not properly interpret evidence concerning patients with conditions that put them at increased risk.
- The NCD's policy on dose escalation and dose timing are inconsistent with FDA-approved labeling and underlying clinical studies. CMS has misinterpreted clinical data in assuming that the NCD rules on dose escalation and timing of a dose increase have been shown to be safe and effective.

ASCO will continue to pursue solutions to these issues with CMS, the Department of Health & Human Services, and Congress.

ASCO also has issued a set of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to assist oncology practices in understanding and following the coverage decision.

Off-Label Updates

Proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Rule For 2008

In July, CMS issued the [proposed Medicare physician fee schedule rule for 2008](#). In the regulation, CMS proposes to establish an annual process whereby drug compendia could be reviewed to determine whether they qualify as references for off-label uses of cancer drugs. ASCO has submitted extensive [comments](#) on this proposal as well as other provisions in the regulation, including the scheduled reduction to the physician

conversion factor, and the continuation of the Physicians Quality Reporting Initiative into 2008.

New FDA Approval

TOTECT™ (Dexrazoxane) For Injection

On September 6, 2007, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved dexrazoxane hydrochloride for injection (Totect(tm)), equivalent to 500 mg dexrazoxane, for the treatment of extravasation resulting from intravenous anthracycline chemotherapy.

Full prescribing information, including clinical trial information, safety, dosing, drug-drug interactions, and contraindications is available for [NDA 22-025 APPROVED LABELING TOTECT™ \(DEXRAZOXANE\) FOR INJECTION](#).

ASCO sends periodic e-mails to its Carrier Advisory Committee (CAC) Network as a means of disseminating information and increasing awareness about Carrier/LCD issues around the country. You have received this e-mail as an identified interested party in the LCD process (e.g. State Society President, Oncology/Hematology/Gynecology CAC Representative/Alternate, CPC Member, CPC State Affiliate). More information is available at [ASCO's website](#). To submit corrections to ASCO's CAC website, or to obtain further information about any items included in this e-mail or CAC issues in general, please contact:

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