

# ASCO CAC Network E-News

## January 2009 Issue

### Medicare Administrator Contractor Updates

#### *Five New A/B MAC Contracts Awarded for Jurisdictions 6, 8, 10, 11, and 15*

The following table outlines each jurisdiction, the states under each jurisdiction, the company awarded the MAC contract, and the award date. **NOTE:** The most recent awards are highlighted in **BOLD**. The awards currently in dispute are in **RED**.

Jurisdiction	Award Date	Company	States
1	10/25/2007	Palmetto GBA	American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, CA, HI, & NV
<b>2</b>	<b>5/5/2008</b>	<b>Nat'l Heritage Insurance Corp. (NHIC)</b>	<b>AK, ID, OR, WA</b>
3	7/31/2006	Noridian Administrative Services	AZ, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY
4	8/3/2007	Trailblazer Health Enterprises	CO, NM, OK, TX
5	9/4/2007	Wisconsin Physician Services (WPS)	IA, KS, MO, NE
<b>6</b>	<b>1/7/2009</b>	<b>Noridian Administrative Services</b>	<b>IL, MN, WI</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>6/11/2008</b>	<b>Pinnacle Business Solutions</b>	<b>AR, LA, MS</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>1/7/2009</b>	<b>National Government Services</b>	<b>IN, MI</b>
9	9/12/2008	First Coast Service Options	FL, Puerto Rico, & Virgin Islands
<b>10</b>	<b>1/7/2009</b>	<b>Cahaba GBA</b>	<b>AL, GA, TN</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>1/7/2009</b>	<b>Palmetto GBA</b>	<b>NC, SC, VA, WV</b>
12	10/24/2007	Highmark Government Services (HGS)	DE, DC, MD, NJ, PA
13	3/18/2008	National Government Services (NGS)	CT, NY
14	11/19/2008	Nat'l Heritage Insurance Corp. (NHIC)	ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
<b>15</b>	<b>1/7/2009</b>	<b>Highmark Medicare Services (HMS)</b>	<b>KY, OH</b>

The official announcement of the A/B MAC awards can be found in the [January 7, 2009 CMS Press Release](#).

#### *First Coast Issues Final List of MAC J9 Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs)*

All incoming MAC contractors are required to adopt the most clinically appropriate LCD from

the existing LCDs on a single topic. On December 9, 2008, FCSO published the [final list](#) of Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs) for the Part A and Part B transition to Medicare Administrative contractor (MAC) Jurisdiction 9 (J9).

## **Leucovorin Shortage Updates**

### ***ASCO Issues Cancer Policy Alert In Response to Leucovorin Shortage***

On January 8, 2009, ASCO issued a [Cancer Policy Alert](#) in response to the current Leucovorin shortage. The alert mentions the following:

- The reason for the shortage,
- Using levleucovorin (Fusilev),
- Other alternative drugs,
- What the FDA is doing about the shortage,
- Temporary Medicare coverage for appropriate alternatives, and
- What ASCO is doing to assist members during the shortage

### ***Noridian Announces Temporary Coverage Change in Response to Leucovorin Shortage***

On December 23, 2008, in response to the shortage of Leucovorin, Noridian Administrative Services (NAS) announced, “If Leucovorin is used within labeled indications, unavailable and medical necessity is documented, NAS will allow substitution using Levoleucovorin until such time as the current shortage of Leucovorin is resolved.” More information about Noridian’s temporary coverage update can be found on the [Noridian website](#).

### ***Palmetto Allows For Temporary Coverage Change in Response to Leucovorin Shortage***

In December 2008, Arthur Lurvey, MD, the Contractor Medical Director for Palmetto GBA (MAC Jurisdiction 1), announced, “Until the supply shortage for Leucovorin has been corrected, we will allow the use of Fusilev (Levoleucovorin) in all places where Leucovorin was and is covered.”

## **Local Coverage News**

### ***First Coast Issues Local Coverage Article on the Administration of Neupogen and Neulasta Following Chemotherapy Administration***

On December 3, 2008, First Coast Service Options (FCSO) posted an [article](#) to their website referencing the coverage of administration of Neupogen and Neulasta following chemotherapy administration. The updated article provides additional clarification to the existing Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs), [L6567](#) and [L14000](#), which further outline the coverage and administration criteria. FCSO will not cover Neupogen that is administered 24 hours before (or 24 hours after) the administration of a chemotherapy drug. They also will not cover Neulasta administration that occurs within 14 days before (or 24 hours following) the administration of a chemotherapy drug.

***Noridian Recognizes Compendia as Authoritative Source for Determining Medical Necessity and Provides Additional Guidance to Providers***

NAS has retired their “Drugs Used Incident to a Physician’s Service and Their Covered Diagnoses” Local Coverage Determination (LCD), effective January 1, 2009, and has provided additional [guidance](#) to providers for determining medical necessity.

**Local Coverage Updates For Antiemetics (Intravenous and Oral)**

***National Government Services Updates Drugs & Biologicals Local Coverage Policy***

Effective January 1, 2009, National Government Services (NGS) revised their Local Coverage Determination (LCD), [L25820](#), for “Drugs and Biologicals, Coverage of, for Label and Off-Label Uses”. A guideline has been added when billing for an IV drug which has an available oral form.

***First Coast Issues Local Coverage Article for Intravenous Emend® (Fosaprepitant)***

On December 23, 2008, FCSO issued an updated coverage [article](#) for the use of Intravenous Emend® (Fosaprepitant). The article specifies, “For Medicare Part B to cover the IV product, the IV route of administration must meet the criteria for what is considered “reasonable and necessary”.

***Palmetto Updates Local Coverage Article for IV Emend®***

On December 1, 2008, Palmetto GBA, the South Carolina Part B Carrier, updated their local coverage [article](#) for Emend® for Injection stating that they will not cover off-label IV Emend requests. They have also provided guidelines for reporting the use of oral and IV Emend®.

**Clinical Trials Coverage Updates**

***Medicare Coverage of Phase I Trials***

ASCO was contacted by the University of Maryland regarding a letter it received from its Medicare Contractor (Highmark Medicare Services) concerning Medicare coverage of Phase I clinical trials. Highmark (whose jurisdiction includes Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and DC) indicates that it does not reimburse for routine costs associated with Phase I clinical trials. ASCO, in conjunction with the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) and the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), sent a [letter](#) to the University of Maryland clarifying that the Medicare NCD for clinical trials coverage should apply to Phase I oncology trials because of the therapeutic intent criteria. The University of Maryland is using this letter in its response to the Highmark letter.

**ASCO News**

***Important Changes to ASCO Coding & Reimbursement Hotline Policies & Procedures***

Starting January 5, 2009, ASCO has implemented two important changes for the Coding &

Reimbursement Hotline. We hope these changes will help expedite responses and improve service to ASCO members.

- 1) All hotline inquiries should be submitted via e-mail to [practice@asco.org](mailto:practice@asco.org). We believe this will help streamline our response process.
- 2) We are now requesting that inquiries from members and their staff be accompanied by an ASCO member ID number.

State Society Executive Directors who are asking questions on behalf of State/Regional Affiliate members will continue to have access to the hotline. We appreciate your patience as we transition to this new process.

***ASCO Hosting “Adapting to Changes in Medicare for 2009” Audio-Conference Call***

On Thursday, January 22, 2009, ASCO will be hosting their Annual “Adapting to Changes in Medicare” audio-conference call from 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM (EST). Discussion topics will include:

- Overview of Medicare’s 2009 Physician Fee Schedule
- Overview of Medicare’s 2009 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System
- Review of 2009 PQRI Program and oncology-specific measures
- E-prescribing
- Oncology coding update

For more information, and to register for this call, please visit the [ASCO website](#).

**FDA News**

***FDA Approves Degarelix, A New Gonadotropin Releasing Hormone (GnRH) Receptor Antagonist, For The Treatment Of Patients With Advanced Prostate Cancer***

On December 24, 2008, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Degarelix for injection (Ferring Pharmaceuticals Inc., Parsippany, NJ), a new Gonadotropin Releasing Hormone (GnRH) Receptor Antagonist, for the treatment of patients with advanced prostate cancer. This indication is based on Degarelix's effectiveness in attaining and maintaining serum testosterone suppression to medical castration levels during 12 months of treatment in an open-label, randomized, multi-center, parallel-group study.

Full prescribing information, including clinical trial information, safety, dosing, drug-drug interactions and contraindications is available on the [FDA website](#).

***FDA Approves Gleevec For Adjuvant Treatment of Adult Patients Following Complete Gross Resection of Kit (CD117) Positive Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor (GIST)***

On December 19, 2008, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Imatinib Mesylate tablets for oral use (Gleevec®, Novartis Pharmaceuticals) for the adjuvant treatment of adult patients following complete gross resection of Kit (CD117) positive Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor (GIST).

Full prescribing information, including clinical trial information, safety, dosing, drug-drug interactions, and contraindications is available on the [FDA website](#).

***FDA Approves Plerixafor (In Combination With G-CSF) to Mobilize Hematopoietic Stem Cells in Patients with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL) and Multiple Myeloma (MM)***

On December 15, 2008, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration approved Plerixafor, solution for subcutaneous injection, (Mozobil™, Genzyme Corp.) for use in combination with Granulocyte-Colony Stimulating Factor (G-CSF) to mobilize hematopoietic stem cells to the peripheral blood for collection and subsequent autologous transplantation in patients with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL) and Multiple Myeloma (MM).

Full prescribing information, including clinical trial information, safety, dosing, drug-drug interactions, and contraindications is available on the [FDA website](#).

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*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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