



NNECOS News

an email publication of Northern New England Clinical Oncology Society

July 2009
Volume 5 Issue 2

THE 2009 ANNUAL MEETING IS COMING! **Reserve Your Room at the Samoset TODAY!**

This year's annual meeting features more than a dozen breakout and general sessions, bringing timely, useful information to members of oncology care teams from across Northern New England.

The ever popular abstract posters and podium presentations return, with new grant funding available for fellows and nurses (visit www.nnecos.org for complete details). This year's Friday evening dinner presentation will be a survivorship talk, "A Message with Laughter," presented by comedian, juggler, and

cancer survivor Scott Burton. ASCO Clinical Practice Committee Chair, Dr. Michael Neuss presents the latest news from Washington in the ASCO Legislative Update, as well as the future direction of ASCO's Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI) on Saturday morning. Other highlights include a session on productivity measures for hospitals and practices, and a head and neck cancer case presentation panel. This year's meeting will have something for everyone. Watch for registration materials in early September, but reserve your room and save the date today!

Reserve your room for your ocean side escape!



Samoset Resort ~ October 23-24, 2009

With rates starting at \$125 per night*, the limited number of sleeping rooms set aside for NNECOS at the Samoset for this year's annual meeting is will be gone fast! Call 800-341-1650 **no later than September 7, 2009** to reserve your room at the special NNECOS rate. Upgraded accommodations available including deluxe ocean view for \$159*, standards suites for \$259*, deluxe suites for \$289*, and hot tub suites for \$329*. (*plus local tax and 3% resort fee.)

Samoset Resort, 220 Warrenton Street, Rockport, Maine 04856
www.samoset.com ~ 800-341-1650

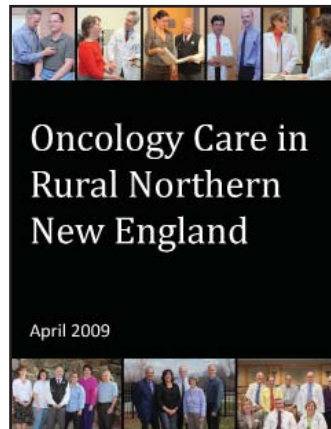
ACCESS TO CARE PROJECT COMPLETE **Publications Workgroup Prepares for Submission to JOP**

The 2008 ASCO Grant Project, Oncology Care in Rural Northern New England, officially concluded with the May 1, 2009 submission of our final report to ASCO. This project simply would not have been possible without the tremendous collaborative efforts of countless individuals, agencies, and hospitals across Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The results of the study, in abstract form, are scheduled to be shared with attendees at this year's annual meeting at the Samoset in Rockport, ME.

Additionally, the publications committee is currently working to

condense the nearly 9,000 word final report into an original research manuscript for submission to ASCO's Journal of Oncology Practice (JOP) for peer review and publication consideration. It is the project team's hope that the manuscript will be accepted and the work published in an upcoming issue of JOP. Once published, the original comprehensive report of the study will be made available to NNECOS members across the region.

Congratulations to the entire project team on this extraordinary effort and the work that lies ahead in continued efforts toward assuring access to high quality oncology care in our region.



NNECOS REPRESENTED AT 2009 ASCO ANNUAL MEETING **Society Recognized as 2009 Grant Recipient**

Associate member representatives Angela Gibbs and Marty Byrne once again represented NNECOS at the ASCO Annual Meeting. Thanks to Angela and Marty for taking the time out of their schedules to network nationally, sharing information about our society with members of the oncology community from around the world. Thanks also to ASCO for providing prime exhibit space to display posters and information about our society and its programs.

NNECOS president Dr. Andrew Hertler was also present at the ASCO Annual Meeting representing the society. Dr. Hertler accepted the plaque recognizing the society as the recipient of a 2009 Affiliate Grant for the Barriers to Clinical Trials Study.



ASCO President Richard L. Schilsky, MD, presents NNECOS President, Andrew Hertler, MD with a plaque recognizing the society's awarding of a 2009 State Affiliate Grant, the society's third in four years.

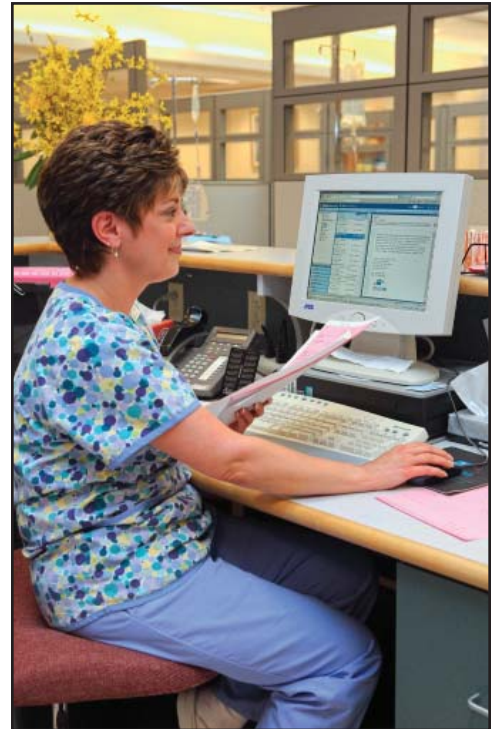
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) ON ONCOLOGY AND ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS (EHR) USE

With the signing of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), allocating approximately \$19 billion towards Electronic Health Record (EHR) adoption, physicians who demonstrate meaningful use of certified EHRs could be eligible for up to \$44,000 in incentives over five years beginning in 2011. Defining the standards for qualified EHRs, as well as the “meaningful use” requirements for physicians using qualified EHRs, will be key to the way these incentives are earned. To qualify, as a “meaningful EHR user” physicians will need to:

- Use a certified EHR product that complies with federal standards for interoperability, or sharing data between electronic systems;
- Use e-prescribing software;
- Use a certified EHR to exchange health information to improve the coordination and quality of care; and
- Use a certified EHR to electronically report on the quality of care.

The Department of Health and Human Services is required to adopt, through the regulatory rule-making process, an initial set of standards, implementation specifications, and certification criteria by December 31, 2009.

ASCO has provided comment on the initial definition of “meaningful use” to highlight the needs of oncology. ASCO is also hosting its 2nd EHR Symposium: Harnessing the EHR, From Incentives to Sustainability, October 6-7 in San Francisco, to prepare oncologists for these changes in health care, specifically how ARRA and the final “meaningful use” criteria will affect their health care IT plans in the community-based oncology practice.



Register now at www.asco.org/ehrsymposium for this important event.



OOPS!

Has Your NNECOS Membership Lapsed?

Are you still a member of the region’s premiere professional, not for profit oncology society? Not sure?

Email nnecos@comcast.net or visit http://www.nnecos.org/NNECOS_Website/Members/ and check if your name is listed.

We value your participation and hope that you will continue to work with us to assure the availability of and access to high quality oncology care in our region.

Dues renewal payments can be sent to: **NNECOS, PO BOX 643, SANDOWN, NH 03873**

PUBLIC COMMENT REQUESTED

Contact Your Senators About Co-Sponsoring Proposed ASP Reform

S 1221-A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more appropriate payment amounts for drugs and biologicals under part B of the Medicare Program by excluding customary prompt pay discounts extended to wholesalers from the manufacturer’s average sales price.

To express support for this reform, members may contact their senator’s Health LA (legislative assistant) to ask their Senator to co-sponsor Senate Bill S1121 as well as support the issue if and when it comes up as an amendment to the HCR. (Health Care Reform Bill) .

NH

Judd Gregg
Health Legislative Assistant:
Elizabeth Wroe
elizabeth_wroe@gregg.senate.gov

Jeanne Shaheen
Legislative Assistant
Alison MacDonald
alison_macdonald@shaheen.senate.gov

VT

Patrick Leahy
Health Legislative Assistant
Kathryn Neal
kathryn_neal@judiciary-dem.senate.gov

Bernie Sanders
Health Legislative Assistant
Daniel Keeney
daniel_keeney@sanders.senate.gov

ME

Susan Collins
Health Legislative Assistant
Priscilla Hanley
priscilla_hanley@collins.senate.gov

Olympia Snowe
Health Legislative Assistant
Bill Pewen
bill_pewen@snowe.senate.gov



SPRING PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SEMINAR GOING STRONG!

More than 100 members of the oncology community gathered in Concord on May 19th for the 6th Annual NNECOS Spring Practice Management seminar. Delving into the difficult world of oncology practice management, billing, and coding, the meeting brought together the region's oncology community with regional and national authorities. This year's meeting once again delivered timely, useful updates and information on the ever-important billing and coding side of oncology practice.



The day began with a timely J14 MAC update from CMS director, Dr. Craig Haug, and then split into breakout sessions targeted toward nursing-office based, hospital based, and radiation oncology specific sessions. Thanks to all who participated in this important, informative day.

PAYOR ROUNDTABLE

Following the educational sessions at the 2009 Spring Practice Management Seminar, NNECOS leadership hosted an invitation only payor roundtable discussion to begin to foster open communication on broad issues of patient access to cancer care.

The purpose of the meeting was to begin to increase communication, to increase alignment between payors and the oncology community, and to explore possible collaborations with individual payors on a society or state level.

Participants included NNECOS leadership, and representatives from Blue Cross Vermont, CMS, Anthem New Hampshire, Cigna, and health aides to US Senator Jeanne Shaheen and US Representative Paul Hodes.

Central to the discussion was the general agreement that the current United States Health Care System is financially unsustainable, inequitable and maybe not of the best quality. Issues discussed included the rapid pace of changing healthcare technology, evidence vs. consensus based guidelines, payors' role in clinical research, emerging technologies, care in the most cost effective setting, and the overall fragility of the healthcare system. Payor concerns included too many and unnecessary tests and procedures, out of control drug costs, and the importance of shifting to palliative care at the appropriate time. The potential of evidence-based guidelines and comparative research as possible opportunities was noted, particularly studies that look at how care can be provided "better" in a physician office.

The working group agreed to remain in communication with one another and to work together whenever possible toward sustainable, quality oncologic care in our region.

MAINE TANNING FACILITIES LAW TOUGHENED

Thanks in part to the efforts of the Maine Cancer Consortium, and the Skin Cancer Workgroup, restrictions on minors utilizing tanning facilities have been toughened in Maine. Maine Governor Baldacci recently signed into law the following toughened restrictions:

- children under 14 are prohibited from using tanning facilities
- minors aged 14 and 15 require on site parental supervision
- minors aged 14 and older must have written parental consent valid for one 1 year
- parents/guardians must read and sign information on the risks of tanning as prepared by the Department of Radiation Control.

Maine Skin Cancer Workgroup Co-Chair Ken Smith brought the issue to the attention of NNECOS in 2007, at which time the society issued a letter of support. An additional letter of support was issued in the spring of 2009. While the language reached in compromise in the final legislation was not as stringent as many had hoped, it is another step toward protecting the youth of Maine from skin cancer.



RESEARCH FUNDING OPPORTUNITY **Call for Proposals**

The Northern New England Clinical Oncology Society is seeking research funding proposals for investigative projects of value to the entire Northern New England community of cancer care providers. The society seeks to award one or more research grants to worthy proposals, up to a total of \$20,000. Eligible candidates will be a current NNECOS member in good standing. Projects should be in alignment with the society's mission to assure access to high quality oncology care in our region. Preference will be given to projects promoting collaboration amongst NNECOS institutions (academic and community). Project topics might include improving supportive care, enhancing access

to research trials, and increasing access to cancer care in the region. Awardees will be notified on or around December 15, 2009, be required to submit progress reports to NNECOS, and to present a final report of the research to the NNECOS annual meeting.

Funding applications are available at www.nnecos.org.

Completed applications must be received by nnecos@comcast.net no later than 5pm on September 15, 2009.

YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO US

We are interested in your feedback and suggestions. Please send your comments and suggestions for future issues to nnecos@comcast.net.

Feel free to forward this issue of NNECOS News to your colleagues who may not be current members of Northern New England Clinical Oncology Society. If you would prefer not to receive future e-mail correspondence from NNECOS, please reply to this message and type “remove” in the subject line.



NEWS FROM OUR SUPPORTERS

“News from our Supporters” will be included in NNECOS News on a space available basis, with preference being given to supporters who have not shared news in the previous two issues. Send your submissions to nnecos@comcast.net.

SANOFI AVENTIS

Patient Assistance Income Eligibility Change

PACT+® (Providing Access to Cancer Therapy), is Sanofi-aventis U.S.'s PAP for Cancer medications. PACT+ provides access to our oncology brands for eligible low income patients with an income of no greater than 500% of the Federal Poverty Level. PACT+ also provides reimbursement support services plus offers help in identifying a variety of alternative services and resources to support the specific needs of cancer patients. For more information on PACT+, please call 1-800-996-6626.

NOVARTIS

Afinitor® approved

Afinitor® approved in US as first treatment for patients with advanced kidney cancer after failure of either sunitinib or sorafenib.

LILLY ONCOLOGY

Additional indication for ALIMTA

On July 6, 2009, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an additional indication for ALIMTA® (pemetrexed for injection) (HCPCS code J9305). Now, ALIMTA is indicated for the maintenance treatment of patients with locally advanced or metastatic nonsquamous non-small cell lung cancer whose disease has not progressed after four cycles of platinum-based first-line chemotherapy.

In addition to the new indication, ALIMTA is approved by the FDA for the following indications: Nonsquamous Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer, Initial Treatment, and Nonsquamous Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer After Prior Chemotherapy.

GENENTECH

FDA grants accelerated approval to bevacizumab injection (AvastinR, Genentech, Inc.) as a single agent for patients with glioblastoma with progressive disease

On May 5, 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted accelerated approval to bevacizumab injection (Avastin®, Genentech, Inc.) as a single agent for patients with glioblastoma, with progressive disease following prior therapy. Full prescribing information, including clinical trial information, safety, dosing, drug-drug interactions and contraindications is available at www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2009/125085s0169lbl.pdf.

Patient Assistance

Genentech BioOncology Access Solutions provides access and reimbursement assistance including Patient Support Link, a personalized referral service, connecting patients to organizations that may be able to provide assistance. www.genentechaccesssolutions.com

NNECOS wishes to thank all of our Supporters for their contributions in support of the mission of the society, to ensure the availability of and access to high quality oncology care in our region.