



# MEDICAL ONCOLOGY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, INC.

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PARTNER IN THE CALIFORNIA ONCOLOGY CONSORTIUM (COC)

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April 19, 2005

Senior Dianne Feinstein  
c/o Guillermo Gonzalez, Deputy State Director  
Via Fax: 310-914-7318

**RE: Supporting & Signing on to the letter written to President Bush by Congressman Zach Wamp (R-TN) and Albert Wynn (D-MD).**

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Since 1990, the Medical Oncology Association of Southern California (MOASC) is an advocate for, protects, and advances the interests of cancer patients and their treating physicians in providing effective and state of the art cancer care.

The Medicare Modernization Act eliminated the overpayment to cancer care professionals for drugs covered under Medicare Part B, however these lowered reimbursement rates went too far. Using the Government Accountability Office Report, the cancer community updated the finding with actual, current Medicare reimbursement rates and found that the average costs for cancer drugs now exceeds Medicare payments.

The change to a market-based drug reimbursement system temporarily increased funding for underpaid cancer care services in 2004, but Medicare reimbursement for these services decreased in 2005. There are certain cancer care services not adequately reimbursed under the new Medicare payment system.

Additionally, in light of these changes, private insurers will be reforming their own cancer reimbursement rates starting in July to closely reflect the Medicare system.

To augment the lost Medicare funding, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created a \$300 million symptom assessment demonstration project for 2005. Therefore, a physician may file a Medicare reimbursement claim for physician services if he or she documents that the patient was asked and treated for pain, nausea, and/or fatigue related to cancer treatment. However, this one-year demonstration project will end in 2005 and Medicare funding for cancer care will lost \$300 million.

We urge you to sign on to the attached letter to President Bush asking that CMS extend the symptom assessment demonstration project through 2006. This will allow CMS and the cancer community to work together to find a suitable, long-term solution for Medicare payment for cancer care drugs and services. To sign the letter or for more information, please contact Lori Pepper in Congressman Wynn's office (5-8699) or Alex Richard in Congressman Wamp's office (5-3271).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding oncology issues, please contact Steven J. Tucker, M.D. or Mariana S-B Lamb, M.S. at the MOASC office (909) 985-9061.

Sincerely,  
Steven J. Tucker  
Steven J. Tucker, M.D.  
President

Sincerely,  
Mariana S-B Lamb  
Mariana S-B Lamb, M.S.  
Executive Director

Attachments

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