

**THE SOCIETY OF RI CLINICAL ONCOLOGISTS, INC.
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RICO Minutes – November 19, 2008

Vincent Armenio, M.D.

The Society of Rhode Island Clinical Oncologists met November 19, 2008. The following members were present: Drs. Joseph DiBenedetto, Alex Papa, Jamie Symthe, John Przygoda, Anthony Testa, Raymond Chaquette, Peter Rintels, Ursula Reusch, Diane Paggioli, and Fred Schiffman.

Raymond Chaquette, M.D.

Dr. Smythe reviewed the Treasurer's report. We have a total balance of \$22,453.

Playkil Joseph, M.D.

The letter from Dr. Manocchia from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island was reviewed. They have loosened their restrictions with the ordering of MRIs and CT scans for oncologists. Prior authorization, however, is still needed for ordering PET scans.

Robert Knisley, M.D.

Robert Legare, M.D.

The issue of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island Specialty Pharmacy was discussed. There is a problem with patients who are in immediate need of medications for neutropenia or thrombocytopenia. They may be delayed in getting their medications. The medications of particular interest were Neulasta, Neupogen, and IVIG. The members felt that a letter should be sent to Dr. Manocchia to again review the issue of these particular drugs. It was hoped that BCBS of RI would carve out oncology from these drugs or eliminate them from Specialty Pharmacy.

Thomas Myers, M.D.

Diane Paggioli, D.O.

John Przygoda, M.D.

Peter Quesenberry, M.D.

Vishram Rege, M.D.

The issue of the dispensing of oral chemotherapeutic drugs in the office was raised. Some felt there might be a conflict of interest to dispense these drugs. It was elected not to have a representative from a GPO at our meeting to discuss this with the group at present. Most members did not feel inclined to dispense oral chemotherapeutic drugs.

Ursula Reusch, M.D.

Peter Rintels, M.D.

The 2009 Medicare Fee Schedule was handed out. There will be a slight increase in E&M reimbursement, however oncology specific services will decrease significantly. The rates for the national averages were distributed for 2009.

Sundaresan Sambandam, M.D.

Fred Schiffman, M.D.

David Stoll, M.D.

The Medicare hospital-outpatient perspective payment system rule was presented. The significant change will include a reduction in reimbursement for HOPPS from an ASP +5 to an ASP +4.

Anthony Testa, M.D.

Anthony Thomas, D.O.

The new Blue Cross policy for ESAs was distributed.

Alan Weitberg, M.D.

There was a discussion regarding Medicare Administration Contractors. At present we do not know who our MAC contractor will be.

Edward Wittels, M.D.

RICO has elected to donate money to a fellow's program to institute a grant of \$500 for a hematology-oncology fellow to attend the ASCO meeting in June.

The ASCO state affiliate project was distributed.

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A handout was distributed regarding Medicare service level claim information.

The ASCO elections are currently open and will be closing shortly. We urge all our members to vote.

Dr. Schiffman in the open forum asked RICO's approval for supporting oncology hospitalists at Rhode Island Hospital. This would benefit both fulltime and community doctors. There was unanimous support of this.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Paggioli, DO