

Although versions of the *Medicare Modernization Act* have passed both the House and the Senate and moved into conference committee for debate, the fight is far from over. Consistently we hear from our Washington experts that some of the best lobbying efforts are done close to home. Putting real faces to names in one on one meetings with legislators is an important and powerful way to send the needed message they must carry back to congress. It is the core of democracy and our republic.

On August 19, 2003, Brent Evans, OA Executive Vice President and I met with Representative Steve LaTourette (R), our Ohio congressman, to discuss the current issues facing outpatient oncology. On behalf of all OA members we presented our arguments and sought Congressman LaTourette's support in opposing the drastic cancer cuts in the Medicare legislation. Also debated during our meeting were the equally disturbing Senate proposal and possible conference committee's inappropriate cuts to outpatient cancer treatment.

Congressman LaTourette was particularly interested in the


CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE!

Switchboard: 202-224-3121 or go to <http://capwiz.com/asco/home/>

Oncologist's position, as he was aware of the strong opposition to the proposed cuts but not completely familiar with the core issues and the tragic ramifications. He commented that while recently touring Ohio hospitals with Thomas Scully, CMS Administrator, Scully made a joke. Scully said he hoped they didn't encounter any Oncologists because these physicians were really riled up.

OA provided Congressman LaTourette a complete package of materials outlining all of the concerns and opposing positions related to the bills. We reviewed the key items in detail and answered a number of the

Congressman's questions. He was compassionate and understanding in readily admitting that the bill was enormous and filled with a mix of issues, many of which he opposes. He agreed that wholesale cuts to physician reimbursement only shifts dollars inappropriately. LaTourette understands that by enacting either the current House or Senate package it will result in limited access to outpatient cancer treatment.

It is a Congressman's job to appease his constituents; this is, of course, politics. We will maintain an open line of communication with our Congressman and continue to lobby aggressively for his support. Although only through monitoring his vote will we truly know if our visit changed our state Representative. At this time I can state that one thing is for sure – Congressman LaTourette knows the concerns and position of OA and our physician members.

I strongly urge you to take the time to personally meet with your legislators. You are an educated and powerful voice.

Joseph Lewarski, OA's Chief Operating Officer and Co-founder, answers the frequently asked questions posed by OA's membership. Contact him with your questions at jlewarski@rcmed.com.


NEUMEGA® CONTRACT REMINDER

Oncology Associates reminds you of its contract with Wyeth/Genetics Institute. The contract provides discounted pricing for the product Neumega in 5mg Vial and 5mg Vial 7/bx quantities.

Wyeth/Genetics Institute offers a reimbursement/medical affairs hotline: 888-638-6342 for assistance in regard to your questions about billing for Neumega.

NEUMEGA HOTLINE: 888-638-6342

ETHYOL® CONTRACT REMINDER


Oncology Associates reminds you of its contract with MedImmune Oncology, Inc. The contract provides discounted pricing for the product Ethyol®, a selective cytoprotective agent used to reduce toxicities associated with certain cancer chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Ethyol® is available in 500 mg/10mL vials.

For more information on the Ethyol® contract, please contact Oncology Associates at **888-732-7352**.