



Mandatory Vendor Imposition

Causes Concern for Patients and Physicians

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The Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) included an option for physicians to obtain chemotherapeutic drugs through the use of a Competitive Acquisition Program (CAP). This program dictates the provision to receive drugs from one or more vendors and is commonly referred to as Mandatory Vendor Imposition (MVI). This program will take effect in 2006 and will allow oncologists the opportunity to either obtain their infusible and injectable chemotherapeutic drugs administered in the office setting through a CAP or MVI or continue to obtain their

drug independently and receive reimbursement at ASP +6%. The MVI would be authorized by the government to ship the patient's drugs directly to the physician and subsequently bill the Medicare program. This provision, at present, will apply only to Medicare patients in 2006.

Disturbing Issues

The concept of an MVI raises some disturbing issues to both patients and physicians. Oncologists who elect to participate in the MVI would no longer be able to store inventories of cancer drugs in their offices on an *as needed* basis for

patients. This lack of availability may necessitate the patient returning to the office on another day other than the office visit to receive the chemotherapy. The MVI concept would be less flexible and may also delay treatment in those patients who require a change in their chemotherapeutic regimen since the new agents would not be available to the physician at the time the decision to change therapy is made. Drugs previously ordered in advance for a specific patient may not be used for any other patient or purpose, and this could contribute to significant waste and expenditure for those patients changing chemotherapeutic regimens. Oncological drug regimens can cost thousands of dollars for a single vial, and the cost of drug waste could be quite exorbitant to the system.

Safety and Legal Concerns

There is also a risk of liability and drug safety given the concept of MVI. There is the potential of mishandling of cytotoxic drugs and lack of control over what goes into a particular mixture of chemotherapeutic drugs obtained from the

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