Medical Group Management Association Assembly of Oncology Hematology Administrators . . . Who Are We? Why Are We Here?

By John E. Hennessy

The Assembly of Oncology Hematology Administrators (AOHA) is one of many special interest groups within the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA). MGMA, which began in 1926, is led by President and CEO William F. Jessee, MD, FACMPE. MGMA serves 21,000 members who

lead and manage more than 12,500 organizations in which almost 270,000 physicians practice.

MGMA's mission is to continually improve the performance of medical group practice professionals and the organizations they represent. AOHA shares that vision with a specific focus in oncology and hematology practices.

The American College of Medical Practice Executives (ACMPE) was established in 1956 and is the standard-setting and certification body of MGMA. ACMPE developed the Body of Knowledge for Medical Practice Management. Through continuing education, public speaking, and examinations, ACMPE encourages practice administrators to promote their professional growth. ACMPE awards both Certified Medical Practice Executive and Fellowship status to those who demonstrate proficiency in the field.

MGMA AOHA, more than 900 strong, has two principal activities that support oncology/hematology administrators in their work: an e-mail forum and annual conference.

The MGMA AOHA e-mail forum is where the issues of the day can be pondered, debated, and hashed out among more than 600 participating members. Some issues can be quite simple, focused on policies and procedures, consent forms, or benefits comparisons, for example. Some issues are focused on more strategic issues—such as hospital relationships, purchasing groups, and insight from Washington, DC. What makes the serve-mail forum so effective is that participants tend to respond quickly, with a number of thoughts from a diverse perspective.

The serve-mail forum is one of the most active in MGMA, which is not so much a result of the medium as it is the

membership. The participants—and the practices which support their members in MGMA AOHA—are committed to the continued growth and success of their practices and the profession.

Each spring, we look forward to the MGMA AOHA education conference, which has exceeded 350 attendees the last few years, in locations such as Portland, Oregon; Boston, Massachusetts; San Diego, California; Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; and Austin, Texas. Our next conference will be in April 2008 in Orlando, Florida.

The 2007 conference began with industry focus groups, a unique opportunity for those interested to meet with 12 to 15 oncology administrators from diverse backgrounds, to get the pulse of the industry and thoughts on its future. At the same time, a seasoned practice administrator was leading an "Oncology 101" class for those new to the oncology field. We had a keynote presentation by Tom Scully, former administrator of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. For the second year, we had a panel of experts update us on the legislative agenda in the nation's capitol. We also had small-scale work groups investigating electronic medical record implementation, outsourcing of laboratory services, and the use of midlevel providers.

For 2008, we will bring the "Oncology 101" class and Washington Update panel back for a return engagement. In addition, we have sessions scheduled on a range of topics: advanced care planning; organizational development, managed care contracting, certificate of need, crisis communications, and genetic counseling. Katherine Eban, author of "Dangerous Doses," will be our keynote speaker.

MGMA AOHA also has outreach collaborations with ASCO, Association of Community Cancer Centers, Oncology Nursing Society, and the National Patient Advocate Foundation. This year we are working with the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists to welcome these administrators and practices to the MGMA AOHA community.

MGMA AOHA looks forward to continuing to serve and enhance our oncology practices and improve the care we provide to our patients.

John E. Hennessy is Executive Director, Kansas City Cancer Center, Overland Park, Kansas.

DOI: 10.1200/JOP.0818001