State Affiliate News

State Affiliate Grant Program

Once again, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) has awarded nine state societies with state affiliate grants which enabled them to implement programs or activities that contribute to their organizational goals. The State Affiliate Grant Program, which began in 2005, was developed to help state societies launch promising initiatives that needed funding. In 2007, ASCO continued this tradition of recognizing and rewarding organizations, providing societies such as Washington State Medical Oncology Society (WSMOS) and Florida Society of Clinical Oncology (FLASCO) with the resources to start up or sustain new programs.

WSMOS received a grant to hold the Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) Jurisdiction 2 Regional Symposium. At this meeting, WSMOS hoped to “develop a forum for ongoing regional collaboration between oncologists and administrators in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and the MAC Jurisdiction 2.” Society President, Dr Richard McGee says, “We specifically invited the Alaska group [now the Denali Oncology Group] that was then in the process of forming their own State Society (we had helped them to get started with a prior year ASCO Grant) and we wanted to try to engage the Idaho State Society and its members with whom we had not had as much contact as we had with Oregon and Alaska.” This successful event attracted 87 attendees.

As a result of this meeting, WSMOS was able to strengthen its relationship with Alaska and Oregon oncologists. This symposium also provided WSMOS with the opportunity to learn more about issues and problems facing neighboring organizations and foster collaboration and communication among these societies. From hosting this event, WSMOS members also learned more effective ways to coordinate outreach efforts. Dr McGee says, “We learned that if we target a smaller audience of committed members and state society board members, we are able to get reasonably good attendance for meetings that are of several days duration.” Having developed a solution for the problem of publicizing the symposium, WSMOS is now more prepared to advertise future events.

Another recipient of the State Affiliate Grant, FLASCO, used their award to continue their work on the Florida Clinical Trials Marketing Plan. This is the second state affiliate grant that FLASCO has been awarded. The purpose of the

FLASCO Cancer Trials Network Marketing Plan was to “outline the strategic goals of the FLASCO Cancer Trials Network.” The centerpiece of the marketing plan was to create a Web site (www.fctn.org) and informational brochures for the network. The long-term goals for this project include creating a shared services center, providing investigators with resources, and developing a research advocacy program.

For Dr Randal Henderson, former FLASCO President, and others who worked on this program, it was certainly not a smooth start. According to Dr Henderson, “Selecting the right trial is challenging.” However, he adds, “You have to pursue the goal even if a specific trial doesn’t work out.” Highlighting the success of the Florida Clinical Trials Marketing Plan, FLASCO Executive Director, Clinical Trials Network, Janice Grimes says, “We made contact with a lot of companies.” While Grimes calls the project “labor intensive,” she firmly believes that the FLASCO Cancer Trials Network will be successful in conducting clinical trials.

Dr Henderson learned some valuable lessons from working on the marketing program. In order to develop this project, Dr Henderson knew that he needed to work with an individual with marketing expertise. He learned that marketing tools such as Web sites and brochures were especially important. Dr Henderson is grateful for the great support provided by a marketing consultant.

Dr Henderson says “Receiving a grant from ASCO is recognition that what we are doing is significant.” While they may have encountered some setbacks with setting up their programs, all society leaders agree that the state affiliate grant has allowed them to achieve many of their goals.

Applications become available in mid-September and close in early December. New this year, applications will be available through an online process only. Applicants must either be the current president or administrator/executive director of a state society. Societies may combine resources to collaborate on a joint activity. A single application listing all collaborating societies should be submitted by the lead organization. For more information, please contact, 703-299-1050 or stateaffiliates@asco.org.

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