LIST OF NEW AND REVISED PROTOCOLS

The following changes have been made to the Benefit Drug List by the Provincial Systemic Therapy Program effective 1 December 2002:

- **Amifostine** – changed to class II for radioprotection of head and neck radiation (HNRAMI)
- **Irinotecan** – class II added for palliative combination chemotherapy for metastatic colorectal cancer (GIFOLFIRI)

A Class II form must be completed and submitted to the Provincial Systemic Therapy Program before the drug will be dispensed at a regional cancer centre or reimbursed to a community hospital. The current Benefit Drug List, Class II forms and Undesignated Indication application forms are available on the BC Cancer Agency website (www.bccancer.bc.ca) under Health Professionals Info, Chemotherapy Protocols, Frequently Used Forms.
Protocols are available on the BC Cancer Agency website (www.bccancer.bc.ca) under Health Professionals Info, Chemotherapy Protocols.

**CANCER MANAGEMENT MANUAL**

**Breast Cancer** (Section 6.9) The hormonal therapy section for metastatic breast cancer in postmenopausal women has been revised to reflect the current options of hormonal agents.

**Skin-Melanoma** (Section 6.2) The management of patients with malignant melanoma and high risks of recurrence has been revised to include the adjuvant use of high dose interferon in patients with palpable lymph nodes at diagnosis or recurrence.

The Cancer Management Manual is available are available on the BC Cancer Agency website (www.bccancer.bc.ca) under Health Professionals Info, Cancer Management Guidelines.

**PRE-PRINTED ORDER UPDATE**

Pre-printed orders should always be checked with the most current BC Cancer Agency protocol summaries. The BC Cancer Agency Vancouver Centre has prepared chemotherapy pre-printed orders, which can be used as a guide for reference. An index to the orders can be obtained by Fax-back.

**CANCER DRUG MANUAL**

**Doxorubicin** Maximum lifetime dose when used in combination with cyclophosphamide has been clarified in the Dosage Guidelines section.

**Melphalan** Storage instruction for oral tablets has been revised in the monograph and patient handout.

**Mitoxantrone** The extravasation hazard in the monograph has been reclassified to the “irritant” category (see Update August 2002 for details) and the preferred route of administration has been changed from direct IV to IV infusion in a 50 mL minibag.

**Oxaliplatin** The compatibility section in the monograph has been revised to clarify the information on administering oxaliplatin and folic acid (leucovorin) via a Y-site.

The Cancer Drug Manual is available on the BC Cancer Agency website (www.bccancer.bc.ca/cdm/). Patient information handouts for cancer drugs are available on the BC Cancer Agency website (www.bccancer.bc.ca) under Health Professionals Info, Drug Database, Drug Index (Patient).

**COMMUNITIES ONCOLOGY NETWORK**

**Filgrastim (G-CSF) Reimbursement Guidelines** Filgrastim (G-CSF) is a colony-stimulating factor that specifically targets granulocytes. It can be used to decrease the duration of neutropenia associated with cancer chemotherapy. Filgrastim is not on the BC Cancer Agency benefit list because it is not used for active treatment. Reimbursement of Filgrastim is a unique Pharmacare-BCCA program and the budget for this program is separate from the chemotherapy budget. For reimbursement, the use of Filgrastim must fit specific criteria set by an expert committee of the Pharmacare. Eligible indications include prevention of neutropenia which interferes with delivery of a curative chemotherapy regimen; rescue of prolonged febrile neutropenia after chemotherapy; and specific circumstances before and after a bone marrow transplant. These criteria are outlined on the Filgrastim (G-CSF) Usage form. Filgrastim may also be prescribed as part of a pre-approved clinical trial. A Filgrastim (G-CSF) Usage form, to be completed by the prescribing physician, must be submitted for all Filgrastim prescriptions as indicated below. Outpatients are responsible for the cost of the drug but if they encounter financial difficulties, there may be resources available to help them.

For inpatients at CON hospitals,
- The completed Filgrastim (G-CSF) Usage form must be faxed to the BCCA Pharmacy CON office at (604) 877-6132.
- If the drug is being used for one of the eligible indications (e.g., Rescue of prolonged febrile neutropenia after chemotherapy), the Filgrastim prescription can be filled at the CON hospital. The cost of the drug is billed to the BCCA CON program as per usual billing procedures.
- For unusual clinical circumstances not eligible for coverage, the physician can submit a completed “Undesignated Indication Application” form to the Systemic Therapy Program. If approved, the drug request is processed as outlined above. If not approved, the Filgrastim is dispensed at the discretion of the CON hospital and the cost of the drug is absorbed by the host hospital.
For outpatients at CON hospitals,

- The completed Filgrastim (G-CSF) Usage form must be faxed to Pharmacare at 1-800-609-4884 (250-952-1065, if from Victoria).
- If the drug is being used for an eligible indication (e.g., To prevent neutropenia while the patient is on a potentially curative chemotherapy regimen), the patient can fill the prescription at a community pharmacy. The cost of the prescription will count towards the patient’s annual Pharmacare deductible. Effective January 1, 2002, the annual deductible is $1000 per family. Once the patient reaches this amount, Pharmacare automatically covers 70% of the cost of any further eligible prescription medications for the remainder of the calendar year. When the patient has paid $2000 in costs recognized by Pharmacare, any further eligible costs are covered 100% by Pharmacare.
- Patients over 65 years or those on social assistance will be eligible for coverage as per Pharmacare guidelines.
- Patients should also be directed to check for third party coverage (Blue Cross or other private insurance plans). The patient and family counselling department at the BC Cancer Centres can be contacted to advise in this process.
- Amgen’s Neupogen Care Program may be of assistance for those patients who are unable to pay for the drug or whose request has been denied by Pharmacare. The program’s toll-free number is 1-888-706-4717 and anyone can contact the program on behalf of the patient. The program is committed to ensuring that patients who require Filgrastim have access to it. Reimbursement Specialists will explore all sources of reimbursement. If needed, they will determine through a means test if financing is required to assist with co-payments and deductibles. The extent of support will depend on the patient’s financial status. It is important that this program be contacted prior to the patient filling his/her prescription for filgrastim, as they are unable to provide retroactive reimbursement.

For more information on the reimbursement of Filgrastim (G-CSF) or the Neupogen Care Program, please contact your regional CON Educator or Francis Hu at the BCCA Pharmacy CON office (604-877-6098, local 2515).

Submitted by
Dawn Annable
Pharmacy CON Educator
BCCA-Fraser Valley Centre

PROVINCIAL SYSTEMIC THERAPY PROGRAM POLICIES

BC Cancer Agency Systemic Therapy Policies are available on the BC Cancer Agency website (www.bccancer.bc.ca) under Health Professionals Info, Chemotherapy Protocols, Policies and Procedures.

LIBRARY/CANCER INFORMATION CENTRE

Unconventional Cancer Therapies Manual is available on the BC Cancer Agency website www.bccancer.bc.ca under Patient/Public Info, Unconventional Therapies. The manual consists of 46 short monographs on the more commonly used unconventional cancer therapies (e.g., Essiac, vitamins, teas, shark cartilage) and includes tips for the patient and family on how unconventional therapies can be evaluated. For each therapy the manual provides proponent/advocate claims, as well as evidence-based evaluation/critique quotations from the literature.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Part-time On-line MSc in Oncology and Palliative Care The faculty of medicine of the University of Newcastle in the United Kingdom is offering new, multi-disciplinary work-based, online distance learning programs, for completion over 3-5 years. Students can work towards a postgraduate certificate, diploma or MSc degree, in either oncology or palliative care. The multi-professional programs are aimed at oncology professionals and palliative care practitioners including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, radiotherapists and others. They cover all aspects of delivering seamless care to patients and include treatment modalities, biological, psychosocial and ethical perspectives. The aim of the program is to develop practitioners who are prepared to offer clinical leadership, clinical excellence, and cultivate interdisciplinary collaboration in the delivery of evidence based oncology/palliative care.
The programs are accredited for the preparation for part one of the Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists examination or in medical oncology.

For more information, go to the website http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cancereducationonline/index.htm or contact Mário de Lemos at mdelemos@bccancer.bc.ca.

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<td>Communities Oncology Network</td>
<td>Ext 2744</td>
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### REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE ACCESS

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