

OPTA Review

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ONCOLOGY PHARMACY TECHNICIAN ASSOCIATION | OCTOBER 2021



**WELCOME: NATIONAL
PHARMACY WEEK CELEBRATION
BEGINS OCTOBER 17**

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**HOT TOPIC: SOLUTIONS TO
MANAGING LIMITED
DISTRIBUTION DRUGS**

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A Pharmacy Technician from Duly Health and Care
prepares an intravenous solution.

NCODA & OPTA CELEBRATE NATIONAL PHARMACY WEEK

BY TARYN NEWSOME, CPhT

NCODA

"Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others, belong to us as well." - Voltaire

Pharmacy Technicians nationwide will be celebrated this month on National Pharmacy Technician Appreciation Day, October 19th, 2021. Pharmacy Technician Day is a day to recognize the contributions pharmacy technicians make to the pharmacy as well as their diligent service to care for patients.

Appreciation and gratitude are one of many keys to living a successful and fulfilling life and should be expressed not only just on one day, but every day. The act of gratitude makes us more appreciative and in result, can strengthen relationships.

SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION



It also boosts overall morale, makes others genuinely happy and the list can go on and on! The art of practicing appreciation and gratitude has no limits and can be big or small. Any form of appreciation is accepted! A simple "thank you" is a good place to start. Not only does it have positive effect on the person receiving the gesture but has a meaningful impact on the person giving the gesture.

I am extremely grateful and appreciative of all the OPTA members. I appreciate everyone's contributions to OPTA, and everyone's contributions have made OPTA what it is today! OPTA members, you are making a huge impact on each other, your practices, your teammates and especially the patients you treat every day. On behalf of NCODA and OPTA...thank you Oncology Pharmacy Technicians for all that you do!

SEPTEMBER MEETING RECAP

BY TARYN NEWSOME, CPhT

NCODA

WELCOME: OPTA's September Monthly Meeting began with OPTA Leader, Sara Eisenhart, CPhT, reading the vision and mission statement followed by OPTA Coordinator Taryn Newsome, providing important NCODA and OPTA Updates. Newsome introduced the new Intravenous Education Sheets (IVE) that provide an additional resource along with the Oral Chemotherapy Education Sheets (OCE). Newsome shared that there are currently 15 IV therapies available in the IV library and that there will more are added.

Newsome then shared information regarding the 2021 NCODA Fall Summit. Registration is currently open and filling quickly. NCODA's Fall Summit will be held on October 20th-22nd in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Last month NCODA introduced the Center of Excellence Accreditation Program and Newsome explained that the program is based off ASCO and NCODA Patient-Centered standards for Medically Integrated Dispensing: ASCO/NCODA Standards. More details of the Accred-

tation Program will be announced in the coming weeks.

Newsome then shared the online collaborative app Basecamp, that allows OPTA Members to communicate with one another. Basecamp houses all the monthly OPTA Meeting slides, OPTA resources such as continuing education, NCODA metrics and message board.

OPTA Co-Chair Brandi Gudwien, CPhT, announced that starting Sept 7, 2021, Avella Specialty Pharmacy will no longer service oncology specialty medication for commercially insured patients who have Express Scripts (ESI) as their pharmacy benefits manager. Also, patients with Express Scripts Medicare coverage on the following medications, IMBRUVICA®, VENCLEXTA®, CALQUENCE®, BRUKINSA®, COPIKTRA®, AND XERMELO® will not be serviced by Avella Specialty starting on December 31st.

TECH IN FOCUS: See page 3

DRUG UPDATE: See page 4



Janine Brodeur

CPhT

Lead Rx Services Coordinator
cCare, Fresno, California

Sara Eisenhart

CPhT

Gettysburg Cancer Center,
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Ginger Blackmon

PharmD

Senior Manager of Clinical Initiatives | NCODA



Taryn Newsome

CPhT

OPTA Coordinator | NCODA

OPTA Review

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OPTA Leaders

- Linda Grimsley, CPhT
- Christine Robinson, CPhT
- Emily Zimdars, CPhT
- Brandi Gudwien, CPhT
- Teri Roberts, CPhT
- Sara Eisenhart, CPhT
- JoJo Sanchez, CPhT
- Becki Tinder, CPhT

OPTA Opportunities

MEETING PRESENTATIONS

OPTA members are invited to participate in monthly meetings by providing:

- Drug Updates
- Peer Presentations
- Technician / Practice in Focus

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- NCODA National Monthly Webinar
- NCODA Conferences/Meetings

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact:

- Ginger.Blackmon@NCODA.org
- Taryn.Newsome@NCODA.org

OPTA Resources

NCODA DISCUSSION BOARD

<https://www.ncoda.org/discussion/pharm-tech/>

BASECAMP DOCUMENT STORAGE

<https://3.basecamp.com/3780922/reports/progress>

NCODA/OPTA WEBSITE

<https://www.ncoda.org/oncology-pharmacy-technician-association-opta/>

NEXT OPTA MEETING:

**3 p.m. EST, Wednesday,
October 13th, 2021**

Members will receive
a calendar invitation

OPTA LEADER IN FOCUS

EMILY ZIMDARS LOVES CONNECTING WITH ONCOLOGY FOCUSED PHARMACY TECHS

BY EMILY ZIMDARS, BA, CPhT

M HEALTH FAIRVIEW

Hi there! I'm Emily Zimdars, BA, CPhT. I am a Business Operations Specialist with M Health Fairview in Minneapolis, MN. I started as an Oncology Specialty Coordinator at our largest infusion center compounding hazardous and non-hazardous medications. Shortly after, I was promoted to Oncology Coordinator Supervisor, where I supervised the pharmacy coordinators (technicians) compounding medications, and participated in purchasing, managing drug shortages, etc. After two years as supervisor, another opportunity within my department became available. I was not looking for a new role but felt that this new position was my best chance to continue to grow. Currently, I



Emily Zimdars

oversee the day-to-day operations at four outpatient infusion center pharmacies and an infusion finance team. I am a key contributor to policies and procedures, manage projects, assist with managing drug shortages, review oncology medication plans and Epic Beacon protocols related to oncology. I have always been a big believer that what you put into your career is what you will get out of your career. Be as proactive

as you can in your career path, which is what drove me to join OPTA a few years ago! I love connecting and appreciate working with other leaders and oncology focused pharmacy techs around the country. When I'm not working, I love to try new recipes, craft, and shop. Lately, my husband and I have also been preparing for our little one's arrival this December.

TECH IN FOCUS

Name: Darrell Connor, CPhT

Practice: AON

How can OPTA or NCODA help you and your practice?

Active membership to both OPTA and NCODA provides essential collaboration that adds value to any organization working within the oncology pharmacy healthcare space. Networking with healthcare subject matter experts, earning continuing education, learning and sharing evidence-based, best practices, engaging in OPTA and NCODA offers many benefits to any oncology practice. Now that I am in pharmacy school, I am working with members to help set up an NCODA pharmacy student chapter at Creighton University.

Explain your current role at your practice: Since August of this year, I serve as one of the Project Managers for American Oncology Network. In this role, I play an integral part in supporting, monitoring, coordinating, and facilitating projects and initiatives within the Pharmacy Operations department. Whenever a new project starts, my tasks include gathering necessary due diligence, producing deliverables, collaborating with departmental and interdepartmental



Darell Connor

stakeholders and external vendors, and reporting critical deadlines, objectives, and actionable items until completion. Additionally, I provide feedback on any barriers and solutions identified during the project that can be used for future projects.

What do you enjoy most about your current position?

Working at American Oncology Network allows me to positively contribute to the quality of care provided to oncology patients on a national level. From when I served as the Regional Pharmacy Operations Manager to now as a

Project Manager, setting up new clinics and collaborating with new practices on advancing pharmacy care continues to be the most enjoyable part of my role. Since my pharmacy background consists of a non-traditional pathway, working at AON allows me to exercise those skills and experiences I've learned in creative and innovative ways.

What advice do you have for technicians who are new to oncology/hematology field? Don't be afraid to exit your comfort zone to connect and network with other pharmacy and healthcare professionals within and outside of oncology and hematology. Make a habit of asking questions and sharing ideas!

DRUG UPDATE

UKONIQ®: FDA APPROVES UMBRALISIB FOR PATIENTS WITH PREVIOUSLY TREATED MZL & FL

BY KIM CARROLL,

DOCTOR OF PHARMACY, CLASS OF 2022
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

UKONIQ® is indicated for the treatment of relapsed or refractory follicular lymphoma in adults who have received at least 3 prior lines of systemic therapy and marginal zone lymphoma in adults who have received at least 1 prior anti-CD20-based regimen.¹ The medication is a dual inhibitor of phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase-delta (PI3K δ) and casein kinase 1 epsilon (CK1 δ), with a high selectivity for the PI3K δ isoform.² The recommended initial dose is 800 mg once daily. For severe adverse reactions, first reduce the dose to 600 mg once daily, then to 400 mg once daily as needed. If 400 mg daily is not tolerated by the patient, UKONIQ® should be permanently discontinued.³ It is available as a 200 mg oral tablet and should be swallowed whole with food and a glass of water at the same time each day. If a dose is missed, take the missed dose unless it is less than 12 hours until the next scheduled dose.^{1,3}

Common adverse events include elevated

serum creatinine and AST/ALT levels, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, musculoskeletal pain, anemia, and thrombocytopenia.⁴ CBCs should be performed at least every 2 weeks for the first 2 months and liver function tests should be performed regularly.



The tablets contain FD&C Yellow No. 5 (tartrazine) dye, which may cause allergic-type reactions in some patients, especially those with an aspirin sensitivity. UKONIQ® may also cause reproductive toxicity and teratogenicity (though it is not part of a REMS program). Female patients or males with female partners of reproductive potential should use contraception during treatment and for one month following treatment cessation.^{1,3} Patients should also receive *P. jirovecii* pneumonia prophylaxis during therapy, with additional consideration given for cytomegalovirus prophylaxis.

TG Therapeutics provides various financial assistance programs. These include commercial co-pay programs, quick start and bridge programs, and patient assistance programs for patients who do not have insurance or are underinsured.⁵

Contact 1-877-848-9777 or visit

Ukoniq.com/patient/patientsupport to enroll in the TG PatientSupportTM program for additional information⁶

REFERENCES:

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3. Umbralisib. UpToDate. <https://www-upToDate-com.ezproxy2.library.arizona.edu>. Accessed September 6, 2021.
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5. TG PatientSupport™. UKONIQ®. <https://ukoniq.com/patient/patientsupport>. Updated 2021. Accessed September 6, 2021.
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REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

2021 NCODA Fall Summit

October 20 - 22 | Scottsdale, AZ

JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback

**Surviving and Succeeding:
Elevating the Standard of Patient Care in Medically Integrated Oncology Practices**

Open to all NCODA Members | Limited Availability

OPTA
dispensing positive outcomes

NCODA's Career Share Network

Through the Career Share resource, NCODA connects oncology healthcare professionals of all backgrounds (oncologists, oncology pharmacists, technicians, administrators, etc.) with relevant position postings. To access all current listings, log into NCODA.org

CURRENT LISTINGS

- AON Patient Assistance
- Cancer Specialists of North Florida

HOT TOPIC

TOPIC: MANAGING COMBINATION THERAPIES & LIMITED DISTRIBUTION DRUGS

BY TARYN NEWSOME, CPhT

NCODA

The objective for the Hot Topic segment during OPTA's Monthly Meetings is to encourage collaboration and problem solving with one another so that we can achieve better outcomes for patients. OPTA's September Monthly Meeting discussion topic was the management of combination therapies that contain limited distribution drugs. OPTA Leader, Teri Roberts, CPhT, from Arizona Oncology, began the discussion by sharing a situation that is occurring more frequently in her pharmacy. The pharmacy is often unable to dispense one or more medications in a combination regimen due to limited distribution drugs. Roberts explained that there are many difficult factors in transferring prescriptions to outside mail-order pharmacies. Many OPTA members agreed with Roberts and shared similar experiences and the discussion developed into a teamwork effort to create strategies to improve this process.

PROBLEM: Communication with Mail-Order Pharmacies. Time management is a critical skill many oncology pharmacy technicians have mastered. Excessive amounts of time can cause inefficiency in the pharmacy.
SOLUTION: Begin to contact and create relationships with local and/or regional mail-order pharmacy representatives.

- Initiate faster prescription process
- Skip the call center and have one contact phone number
- Increase communication in all parties involving the patient's cancer treatment

PROBLEM: Patient comprehension

SOLUTION: Although not always ideal for the patient, barriers like this can be confusing, but providing more awareness to the patient regarding their cancer medication and where it is coming from may eliminate uncertainty. Effectively communicating with patients leads to better outcomes.

PROBLEM: Adherence and Compliance

Management

SOLUTION: Circling back up to the first solution, by building and establishing these connections, the pharmacy can reiterate their expectations and standards upon receiving the prescription.

CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION:

The Hot Topic Discussion serves as a platform to encourage OPTA members to use critical thinking and to encourage more engagement with one another, and in this September discussion we achieved just that. After the meeting there was much dialogue between OPTA members to further discuss the solutions to the problem that were presented.



Working Together, We Become Stronger

We're at the Forefront Of Oncology Pharmacy Technician Development. Join us and let your voice be heard to help improve patient care!



OPTA strives to strengthen and empower dispensing staff's vital role by providing leadership and sharing knowledge to ensure better patient outcomes.

OPTA connects members from around the world.

OPTA helps set the standards for oncology pharmacy technicians.

OPTA's success is dependent on the contribution of each individual member.



Scan QR Code
to Join OPTA