



Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation

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ASBMT Notes

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IN 2019, ASBMT WILL CONTINUE ADVOCATING FOR PATIENTS

There's a lot happening right now, as far as policy concerned, in the field of cellular transplantation.

Throughout 2018, CAR-T was the primary focus on the health policy side. Not only is critical funding at stake for these types of therapies, there has been a lot of conversation about costs for CAR-T payments. In August, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) convened its Medicare Evidence Development & Coverage Advisory Committee to discuss the usefulness of patient-reported outcomes as part of the potential National Coverage Determination for CAR-T therapy.

The Medicare Advisory Panel on Hospital Outpatient Payment also reviewed a number of outpatient coding and payment issues related to CAR-T therapies. ASBMT and our partners at Nimitt Consulting advocated for a change to status indicators assigned to the new CAR-T Current Procedural Terminology codes in the Out Patient Prospective Payment System (OPPS).

Furthermore, the National Uniform Billing Committee held several meetings last year touching on coding for inpatient claims. On top of that, CMS released its proposal for the 2019 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule and the Quality Payment Program.

If it seems like a lot, that's because it is. As health care—both from the physician and patient perspective—gets more complicated, it's not surprising we see government entities trying to catch up with the changing landscapes. Rest assured, though, that ASBMT and our partners are advocating on behalf of our membership and the patients our membership serves.

Each and every step of the process, ASBMT was there educating leaders on Capitol Hill about what makes the most sense for not only those working in the

field of cellular transplantation, but those patients who need these groundbreaking treatments.

When CMS put forward a new payment scheme that categorizes CAR-T therapies under Medicare Severity-Diagnosis Related Groups, ASBMT met with CMS Administrator Seema Verma to make sure our voices were heard. ASBMT Executive Director Andre Williams, who was one of the people who met with Verma, said leadership from the society wanted to make sure CMS understood how expensive these therapies can be. Without them, though, it could cost someone their life.

"We were hoping the Medicare Inpatient Final Rule for CAR-T would cover 100 percent for the cost of the drug," Williams said in August after the meeting. "The final rule places a financial hardship on health systems to cover the remaining cost for the drug."

ASBMT also teamed up with the American Cancer Society-Cancer Action Network and the American Society of Hematology in November to educate journalists on the importance of CAR-T therapies. This was shortly after ASBMT-President-Elect Navneet Majhail, MD, MS, participated in a Congressional Roundtable. His impassioned speech provided a detailed overview of CAR-T cell therapy and examined potential solutions to keep Medicare's reimbursement systems current with best practices.

"As clinicians, we just want to take care of our patients," he said in November. "We need to move towards rational and responsible alternative payment models if the price of these therapies continues to be very high, and some of the newer models would involve the drug manufacturers to take on some risk. It will take some time to reach that state, and in the meantime ASBMT remains committed to carrying on advocacy at the

local and national level so that our patients can receive the care they need."

Jugna Shah, President of Nimitt Consulting Inc. and reimbursement advisor to ASBMT, provided an excellent presentation on Medicare's current inpatient reimbursement policies for CAR-T to journalists. She walked participants through a case study of two hospitals treating CAR-T patients to demonstrate that even with the New Technology Add-On (NTAP) and additional outlier payment Medicare's payment for CAR-T therapy to hospitals is severely inadequate resulting anywhere from tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses per case.

"It was great to see ASBMT engaged in a one-two punch, so to speak, working hard to engage and inform Hill staff of the reimbursement problems and the required solutions, as well as the media, so everyone has a better understanding of the technical reimbursement formulas as well as the significant operational and financial concerns hospitals are facing," Shah said after the event.

While we're only a month into 2019, know that ASBMT will continue to fight for the betterment of cellular therapies for both the patient and physician. It's important for ASBMT to not only be a society that brings people together to advance the field from a practicing perspective, but also helps people outside cellular transplantation understand the impact of this work.

ASSOCIATION NEWS AND UPDATES What's New With ASBMT

Register Now for the TCT Meetings of ASBMT and CIBMTR

Mark your calendars for the 2019 TCT Meetings. Registration is now open at asbmt.org. Formerly the BMT Tandem Meetings, this premiere event brings together investigators, clinicians,

laboratory technicians, clinical research professionals, nurses, pharmacists, administrators and allied health professionals. This is brought to you by ASBMT and the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research. The full scientific program addresses the most timely issues in hematopoietic cell transplantation.

The event will take place in Houston on Feb. 20, 2019 to Feb. 24, 2019.

The Medical College of Wisconsin is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians and contact hours for allied health professionals for the TCT | Transplantation and Cellular Therapy Meetings.

Save the Date: Beyond Fundamentals of HCT Course

Attending the 2019 TCT | Transplantation and Cellular Therapy Meetings of ASBMT and CIBMTR? Add the Beyond Fundamentals of Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation (HCT) Course to your agenda. Offered simultaneously to the TCT Meetings of ASBMT & CIBMTR, this

course will focus on pharmacotherapeutic management of HCT patients as well as patients receiving CAR-T therapy. Join the Fundamentals of HCT group February 20-21, 2019 for an extensive training program designed to provide practitioners with the skills required to care for patients undergoing HCT.

Please note that registration for the HCT course is separate from registration for the TCT Meetings of ASBMT & CIBMTR. For more information and to register, visit asbmt.org.

ASBMT Clinical Case - Discussion Leaders Needed

The ASBMT Education Committee is in the process of re-launching the Clinical Case Forum, and is looking for members willing to contribute as discussion leaders. Discussion leaders would be expected to provide an opinion on posted cases in their area of expertise an average of once a quarter or less.

If you are interested in serving as a Clinical Case Forum discussion leader, please complete our survey with your interest and area(s) of expertise. Please contact samdor@asbmt.org with any

questions. The survey can be found at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018CCFLeders>

Survivorship SIG Seeking Research Proposals

The ASBMT Survivorship SIG is soliciting research proposals, which may be presented for discussion and feedback during the 2019 Survivorship SIG Meeting during the TCT Meetings of ASBMT & CIBMTR. Please consider submitting research concepts for presentation/discussion at the SIG meeting that focus on prospective research studies of any late effects/complications of autologous or allogeneic transplantation. Psychosocial complications, financial toxicities and caregiver issues are included in the scope of survivorship. The SIG does not have funding to support conduct of the research, but will serve as a facilitator for discussion and promoting collaborative research efforts.

Submit your concept via email attachment to Shahrukh Hashmi, MD, SIG Chair, at Hashmi.Shahrukh@mayo.edu.