

# US Oncology News

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Network support, resources and services  
yield nurturing environment for practices to

**Thrive**  
*and* **grow**



US Oncology®



# Marketing matters



For affiliated practices concerned about developing effective marketing materials, cost effectively, US Oncology's Practice Marketing Resource Center, is a good answer.

Launched in October 2005 as a resource for providing high-quality, cost-effective marketing services to a diversified network of practices, the web-based portal acts as a virtual communications agency. It allows users on the network to develop myriad marketing materials, including brochures, press releases, patient education materials, ads, logos, physician bio sheets, and referring physician letters, all of which can be modified and customized. The service is flexible, easy to use, and cost-efficient; indeed, the templated materials are free.

"Practices can modify the material for their own needs," said **Kimberly Rutherford**, director of Corporate and Marketing Communications. "Some take the material as is, while others tweak it to meet their own marketing and graphic design needs. That was exactly our intent – provide good, malleable tools that practices could make their own."

This Resource Center comes at a time when effective, efficient practice marketing is more important than ever.

"The role of marketing for physicians has evolved, and increasingly, it is appropriate for physician practices to be proactive in how they position their brands in their communities," said **Les Mann**, vice president of Marketing. "We realized that physicians and staff were not aware of the full spectrum of services we offer, and we want our practices to appreciate the breadth and depth of the marketing resources available to them."

In addition to the Resource Center, US Oncology's three Regional Marketing directors have the responsibility of providing guidance, consulting and planning for the practices in their regions. They serve as the primary liaison between the marketing function and the practices.

## Practice Marketing Resource Center tools

The materials available on the site are impressive. For instance, the photo library contains 250 photographs that are unique to the US Oncology network and offered at no charge.

"Users can select an ad, with the available art and copy, or modify the materials to their own visual look," said Rutherford. "There are individual pieces, as well as full campaigns that have been designed to work together."

There are also resources in building or revamping a Web presence.

"We help practices create an effective Web site that not only professionally presents them, but helps them do search engine optimization," said Mann, "so they can have a nice Web site, and it can be found."

"Awareness Packs" are available, covering just about every type of cancer-awareness week or month. Each pack contains such ready-made materials as public service announcements, speeches, press releases, back-grounders, fact sheets, referring physician letters, ads and screening posters. Like everything else, these pieces can be modified to fit individual practice needs.

The Resource Center not only offers a broad range of (continued on page 42)



materials, but also comprehensive services.

"If practices want to customize, or need help rewriting letters, or need someone to print, collate and mail letters, we have all those resources to do that for them," said Rutherford. "We can even create targeted mailing lists or manage all the return mail."

### Hands-on help

**Lisa White**, Marketing and Public Relations manager for **Northwest Cancer Specialists** has found the Resource Center to be an extremely valuable tool. With 35 physicians, two free-standing cancer centers, and eight clinics spread over the Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, Wash., metropolitan areas, it has allowed her to create a variety of materials that present a consistent and professional look.

"It gives me a foundation, so I don't have to start from scratch," said White. "We've used it for a clinical trial brochure, Web site and are looking at creating a total practice brochure, from available content."

She has also used the service for creative guidance in developing ads for the practice, as well as for its free online photography library.

"Within a week and a half of a deadline, I had an ad," she said, "and I've been able to use many photography shots,

which has saved us thousands of dollars."

Perhaps most important to her is the guidance and support she receives from Regional Marketing director, **Rob Baughman**.

"He was a great asset to us in developing a comprehensive marketing plan for the practice," said White. "If there are initiatives I want to start, he's a great sounding board. I can discuss ideas with him, get them polished, and then present them to the physicians for approval."



### Data-based marketing

Another valuable service of the department is Marketing Analytics, where all the number crunching takes place. Managed by **Denise Saenz**, the group can analyze a host of details and scenarios before marketing decisions are made.

"We help practices understand their territories, the competitive landscape, physician demand and overall market assessments of the area," Saenz explained.

Marketing Analytics subscribes to a number of national databases, which are matched to US Oncology's own practice management data. This information can assist practices in analyzing factors and setting priorities regarding growth opportunities, current market share and competitive trends within the local geography.

"We will ask a practice, 'What are you looking to get out of this?' or 'What are the concerns or business issues?'" Saenz said. "We can formulate the appropriate ways to answer those questions."

The group also manages the database of all network-affiliated physicians, clinicians and administrative staff, as well as oncologists outside the network. Known as the Customer Relations Management (CRM) system, it is constantly updated so mailing lists are as accurate as possible. Returned mail is monitored for immediate follow-up. "We investigate why every single returned piece was not deliverable and where that doctor went," Saenz said.

### Peer-to-peer marketing

**Linda Maynard**, R.N., B.S.N., O.C.N., manager of Marketing Services, directs and coordinates the Peer-to-Peer marketing program for **Central Indiana Cancer**

## Referring physician insight

Several qualities can dramatically affect the referring physician's decision-making process. Providing a positive patient experience, and peer-to-peer communication, such as continuous patient updates and in-person interaction with the referring physician, are several traits that can increase referrals to network practices.

Recent research commissioned by the Marketing department provides such valuable insight. Understanding how referring physicians decide where to send their cancer patients is a powerful tool network practices can utilize in order to correctly position their facilities, physicians and services in the market, and drive the referral decision.

In total, 604 physicians participated in the survey. Of those, 202 were family practitioners/general practitioners, 202 were internal medicine physicians and 201 were general surgeons.

A white paper highlighting the results is available through the Practice Marketing Resource Center. For more information contact your Regional Director of Marketing, or [pmrc@usoncology.com](mailto:pmrc@usoncology.com).



**Centers.** The key focus is physician outreach, which includes introducing the practice's new and existing physicians to local physicians, in addition to other business, political and community leaders throughout the region.

"All of our physicians have target markets for every quarter, and we ask each of them to choose three-to-six people to go out and visit," said Maynard. "We track who is going where and what type of event it is, whether it's an educational event, lunch, dinner or a meeting."

This one-on-one marketing has definitely had an impact on strengthening community ties.

"We met with one physician in a new area in January and, by the end of May, we had 22 referrals from her," said Maynard.

"We feel as a practice that the grassroots approach is much more cost- and results-effective," she added. "I've had several doctors tell me that physicians need to do more of this, and I know the doctors appreciate having assistance with their marketing efforts."



2006 holiday cards will soon be available. For more information contact [pmrc@usoncology.com](mailto:pmrc@usoncology.com) or Cara Heiman at 832.601.6053

### The future of Practice Marketing Resource Center

US Oncology will be adding additional marketing materials and tools to further help practices across the network. For instance, the Marketing Department is considering creating educational materials with an ethnic-specific focus targeted toward the Hispanic, African-American and Asian communities.

The Resource Center may also offer materials in financial counseling and complementary care, including acupuncture, massage and nutritional information. An Awareness Pack on blood marrow transplantation is also under way.

To date, it has been very well received. "Half of our practices have already begun using it," Mann reported.

"It really doesn't matter what or how practices market, just as long as they do," said Rutherford. "Marketing themselves consistently and frequently is key to their success." ▲



## US Oncology branding

Marketing at the US Oncology level is also receiving increased attention. In June, the company embarked on a new communication strategy to address misperceptions in the marketplace and to illustrate the benefits of the network to prospective practices.

At the center of this campaign is a new tagline, "Your Practice. Our Support," to reinforce the company's supporting role in efforts of each practice to achieve success. The visual aspects of the campaign demonstrate the diversity of services US Oncology offers, as well as the diverse makeup of the practices and goals within the network.

The advertisements are appearing as two-sided inserts in *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, *Journal of Oncology Practice*, *Oncology Times*, *The Oncologist* and *Hematology Oncology News & Issues*.

The new campaign was also extended to booth graphics, invitations, informational packets and other items provided at ASCO this year, which was the official launch of the campaign.