



# Pennsylvania Cancer Pain Initiative Newsletter

## Fall 2002

Issue 33

### *Cancer Patients Have a Right to Pain Control*

#### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

#### MARGO McCaffrey IN BALTIMORE

Mark your calendar for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual **Conference of the Pennsylvania Cancer Pain Initiative** to be held on **Friday, April 11, 2003** at the Holiday Inn, Harrisburg/Hershey. The registration fee is \$75 and continuing professional education credit will be provided for physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, psychologists, and nursing home administrators. For more information about registration, contact Penn State Continuing Education at ContinuingEd@hmc.psu.edu or 717-531-6483. If you would like to reserve an exhibit table, please contact the PCPI at pcpi@papainrelief.org.

If you have an article to send us for the newsletter, it should be 500-1,000 words, have references, and not been published. The next deadline for receipt of articles is November 5, 2002. Hope to see you on April 11, 2003!

*Georgia Brown, RN, BSN*  
*Director, PCPI*

*Pain Management in the New Millennium* will be presented by Margo McCaffrey, RN, MSN, FAAN on Friday, **November 8, 2002** at the **Baltimore Convention Center** in Baltimore, Maryland. Margo McCaffrey has been a consultant in the development of guidelines for pain control with the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, the American Pain Society, and the World Health Organization. **The PCPI will receive a donation for each registration that mentions "Pennsylvania Cancer Pain Initiative" when they register prior to October 16, 2002.** If you plan to register, please check the box that you learned about EduCaring 2002 from the Pennsylvania Cancer Pain Initiative or mention "Pennsylvania Cancer Pain Initiative" in your email. **For more information** on this seminar, call PDC at 877-744-1548, or send an email to info@pdcfornurses.com. Remember – mention PCPI – before October 16<sup>th</sup>!

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#### **Nursing Home Residents Most Vulnerable Despite Treatment Availability**

*PART ONE*

In the next 20 years, the fastest-growing segment of the population anticipated will be in the group aged 85 years and older. As this population ages, the incidence of cancer corresponds. This explosion of elderly in our nation reinforces the need for all health-care professionals to understand the palliative care needs of the elderly.[1] Nursing homes were not established originally as sites for terminal



Pennsylvania Cancer Pain Initiative in partnership with the American Cancer Society, Pennsylvania Division

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### Nursing Home Residents Continued

care. However, from 1989-1997, statistics for Pennsylvania revealed an 11 percent decrease in hospital deaths (from 60 percent to 49 percent), and an increase in nursing home deaths (from 21 percent to 29 percent).[2] Kemper and Murtaugh found that greater than 1.5 million people in the United States are residents of nursing homes and estimate that 43 percent of persons 65 and older will become nursing home residents prior to death.[3]

According to the National Cancer Institute, older persons may be more vulnerable to environmental carcinogens, and living longer gives various cancers a chance to develop. Studies reveal that significant pain is as high as 50 percent among older people with terminal illness living in communities, and ranges from 45 to 80 percent among nursing home residents. Of cancer patients in nursing homes, one in four elderly persons receive no treatment at all for daily pain.[4] This problem persists despite knowledge that pharmacologic intervention is the mainstay of cancer pain relief, and satisfactory pain control for 90 percent of cancer patients is possible with minimum of adverse reactions.[5] The paradox of living a longer life only to be subjected to untreated cancer pain as an elderly person is unfortunate and needs to be addressed more aggressively by practitioners. Unless the barriers to effective pain management are removed, it would be wise to note that family members, our friends, neighbors, and we are destined to be the recipients of the same lack of care.

Pain management and palliative care in nursing homes, where the most frail and vulnerable reside, is frequently met with the most minimal of physician involvement; generally one visit every 30 days. Cancer pain accounts for the majority of severe pain among this population.[6] Teno et al analyzed a national repository of Minimum Data Set (MDS), the mandated nursing home resident assessment instrument. Among the 2.2 million residents of US nursing homes (within 60 days of April 1, 1999), the nationwide results showed 14.7 percent of residents in a nursing home for 2 assessments were in persistent

pain and 41.2 percent of those in pain at the first assessment were in severe pain 60-180 days later. Results from this study are available on line for each of the fifty states.[2] The most comprehensive list of reasons for the undertreatment of pain in nursing home residents is adapted from Stein and is located in Ferrell & Coyle's *Textbook of Palliative Nursing*. [1,7]

The changing health-care environment has resulted in earlier discharge of patients from hospitals to nursing facilities and homes. Often, these patients are of a higher acuity than in previous years. Current research reveals that many of these patients have cancer pain that continues to be undertreated, despite progress in many areas of pain assessment and management. In McGuire et al, Ferrell & Ferrell cite "...relief of pain is a fundamental responsibility of health care providers...it is ironic that little attention is given to pain in a population that is at high risk for chronic illness and the painful ailments associated with those illnesses. Elderly patients with cancer are often treated less aggressively than younger patients. There are no data to support the notion that the elderly with cancer suffer pain any less frequently or intensely than other patients." [6,8]

*Judith A. Dobson, MSN, CHPN  
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#### References

1. Ferrell BR, Coyle N. Textbook of palliative nursing. New York, New York: Oxford University Press; 2001.
2. Teno JM, Weitzen MS, Wetle T, Mor V. Facts on dying 2002. change over time Center for Gerontology and Health Care Research. Providence, RI: Brown Medical School. <http://www.chcr.brown.edu/dying/PACHARTSOD.htm>
3. Kemper P, Murtaugh CM. Lifetime use of nursing home care. New England Journal of Medicine 1991;324:595-600.

## Calendar of Events

### October 10-12, 2002

**Title:** Palliative Care Fall Forum

**Location:** New Orleans, LA

**Web:** www.capcmssm.org

**Contact:** 212-241-9090

### November 1-2, 2002

**Title:** 2002 JCAHO Leadership Summit on Pain Management: Issues, Barriers, and Solutions for Effective Pain Management

**Location:** Washington, DC

**Contact:** (630) 792-5800

### November 8, 2002

**Title:** Pain Management in the New Millennium with Margo McCaffrey

**Location:** Baltimore, MD

**Contact:** PDC at 877-744-1548, or info@pdcfornurses.com

### November 12-19, 2002

**Title:** Program in Palliative Care Education and Practice

**Location:** Boston, MA

**Web:** www.hms.harvard.edu/cdi/pallcare

**Contact:** 617-724-9509

### November 14-16, 2002

**Title:** Making Sense of Dying and Death

**Location:** Rome, Italy

**Web:** http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/dd1.htm

### April 11, 2003

**Title:** 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the PA Cancer Pain Initiative

**Location:** Holiday Inn, Harrisburg/Hershey, PA

**Web:** www.papainrelief.org

**Contact:** 717-531-6483 or

ContinuingEd@hmc.psu.edu

## Nursing Home Residents Continued

4. Kinzbrunner, BM, Weinreb NJ, Policzer, JS. 20 Common problems in end-of-life care. P. 92. McGraw-Hill; 2002.
5. Abraham JL. A physician's guide to pain and symptom management in cancer patients. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press; 2000.
6. Ferrell BA, Ferrell BR, Osterweil D. Pain in the nursing home. Journal of the American Geriatric Society 1990;38: 409-414.
7. Stein W. Barriers to effective pain management in the nursing home In: Ferrell B, editor. Clinics in geriatric medicine pain management. Philadelphia: Saunders; 1996:604.
8. McGuire, DB, Yarbrow, CH, Ferrell, BR. Cancer pain management (second edition). Boston, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers; 1995.

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*12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
of the  
Pennsylvania Cancer Pain Initiative*

Friday, April 11, 2003

Holiday Inn  
Harrisburg/Hershey  
Interstate 81, Exit 80

More information will be provided in the next newsletter.

Visit our websites: [www.papainrelief.org](http://www.papainrelief.org)  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)