

# REGIONAL ONCOLOGY NURSES

## QUARTERLY

Volume 7 Number 2 Spring 1984

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

GREETINGS. I hope all of you who attended the RONS annual meeting are still feeling that special energy that comes from being around colleagues, friends and outstanding speakers.

As many of you know, the results of the mailed ballot was overwhelmingly in favor of RONS becoming a local chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society. Thus, a new and exciting chapter of RONS history is about to commence. The paper work required to apply for local chapter status is practically complete. Extra thanks to Ryan Iwamoto, Judy Kornell, Ann Oakley and Liz White.

Look for RONS to be in transition over the next year or so as we evolve into the Puget Sound Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society.

We already have three members who are active in the national organization. Ann McElroy, Patti Mulhern and Ruth McCorkle. Our stand on issues and our strength are well known to the ONS leadership. With the Puget Sound area so active in oncology, we will play a key role in oncology nursing activities. We could provide a valuable service to continuing education providers by helping to reduce redundancy of programs by publishing a list of oncology-related lectures and workshops throughout the region. We could contribute to the Oncology Certification program of ONS by submitting test questions. We could apply for research monies from ONS for individual or better yet - cooperative research.

The current board consisting of myself, Ann McElroy, Theresa Coluccio and Ann Reiner are looking forward to working hard. We solicit suggestions and ideas from the membership to make this a year to remember.

We also remind you that help with planning programs for the quarterly meetings, help with the newsletter, help with recruitment of new members is still needed.

Looking forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the next quarterly meeting on May 17th. •• --Janet Schwarz-Appelbaum

### PROFESSIONAL IMAGE MAKING

Eunice Cole, RN, President ANA

Address at 1984 RONS Symposium

Addressing the symposium, "High Tech/High Touch Nursing," Eunice Cole presented the 1984 ANA project, Enhancing the Image of Nursing. Along with other nursing organizations, the ANA is working to strengthen nursing's self image and to advancing the public awareness of the nurse "careerist."

Early in nursing's development, I. H. Robb wrote of nurses as priestesses. Today, Donna Diers in "Nursing as Metaphor" describes nurses as tough, caring and heroic, concerned about the provision of health education. Cole emphasized the growth which has occurred. Imparting this view of nursing is our challenge. She believes the public is open to learning about this new image. Our task at hand is to promote the public view of nursing as one of provider of quality care. This ANA campaign will be delivered via the radio, television and the written press.

On May 6, National Nurse Day, the ANA will launch a program to enhance nursing's role in politics. The ANA concerns in tandem with the public's concerns will be presented. Cole emphasized the importance of one-to-one relations (nurse-to-individual) in building the image of nursing. She stressed that people do not remember "nursing" but rather people remember nurses.

Until now, nursing had yielded to the stereotypes of the past. Perhaps now is a time for these stereotypes to be broken. As President of the American Nurses Association, Eunice Cole was an articulate speaker as well as a listener to our questions and concerns. ••

--Ann Oakley, RN, MN

## AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY FLIES AND HOUSES CANCER PATIENTS FREE OF CHARGE

The American Cancer Society has two programs which are helping make life a little easier for cancer patients receiving treatment in Washington State. They are the Hotel Guestroom Program and ACS AIR (Aviators Involved in Recovery).

The Hotel Guestroom Program, now in its second year, is a cooperative effort between major hotels and the ACS to provide housing facilities for cancer patients and their families while they receive outpatient treatment at major hospitals. Twenty-three hotels in cities throughout Washington presently participate in the program by providing extra guestrooms available for cancer patients. In Seattle alone, over one-thousand nights of lodging have been donated to more than fifty patients and family members.

ACS AIR is a program designed to match patients needing long distance travel with empty seats on corporate and private planes. The ACS has currently three corporations participating: GTE, Washington Water Power and CH2M Hill, and the Seattle chapter of the 99ers, a private pilots' association.

Scheduling and additional information on these programs may be obtained by calling the American Cancer Society Division Office at (206) 283-1152.●●

## AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S CAMPS PLANNED FOR SUMMER

Medical and financial circumstances have often kept children with cancer from

experiencing the adventure of summer Camp Goodtimes, a new ACS-sponsored camp, will make camp for these children reality. One of two ACS camps, Camp Goodtimes will be located on the site of Sealath on Vashon Island. It is scheduled to run from August 19-24 of this year.

The fun of summer camp will be combined with expert health care for each child. Physicians and medical personnel from local hospitals and pediatric centers will volunteer their time at the camp. They will be familiar with and equipped to meet the medical needs of each camper.

Camp activities will include horse riding, hiking, fishing, and crafts. In addition, canoeing, sailing, and swimming will allow the children to take advantage of the camp's beachfront location. Committee Chair Charlotte Ellis stressed that "affording the children an opportunity to gain independence and just have fun is the primary goal of Camp Goodtimes."

In eastern Washington, Camp Betchacan will be serving many young cancer patients. Founder and leader of the camp, now in its third year, is Colleen Evans of Davlat, Washington. Located in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Betchacan will run from July 15-22 and like Goodtimes, offers campers a wide range of activities. Both camps are sponsored by the American Cancer Society, and are completely free of charge for all children.

For camp registration information or to find out how to donate time or money for camp supplies, call the ACS Division Office in Seattle at (206) 283-1152 or the Eastern Area Office in Spokane at (206) 580-5802.●●

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## "THE REST OF THE STORY"

In early 1982, four women came together at the invitation of Doris Molbo, American Cancer Society Nursing Professor. Our challenge was to locate housing (gratis or at extremely low cost) for non-hospitalized cancer patients from our area who receive therapy in Seattle. We met weekly to ascertain what was available in King County as well as in Washington State. In smaller communities some private homes are donated and trailer parks are situated reasonably close to the community hospitals. Neither option was feasible in Seattle.

We wondered if hotels in the area would have a few vacancies that could be donated to be used by cancer patients. A committee member had a friend in the hotel industry and arranged to meet and discuss the possibilities. That friend then invited the committee to present a proposal to the Hotel Management Association.

The rest is history. Our program is the first in the nation. --Judy Korne

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## GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFE HANDLING OF CHEMOTHERAPY Sheree Miller, Pharm.D.

A mainstay of many of our current cancer treatment regimens today is chemotherapy. Guidelines are needed that allow provision of optimal patient care, yet at the same time protect the practitioner from undue exposure to or possible risk of injury from these antineoplastic agents. There are no direct measurements of exposure to antineoplastic agents; no threshold limits or permissible exposure limits have been determined for these agents, such as has been developed by professionals working with possible radiation hazards. The actual risk to personnel who work with antineoplastics is not well-defined. It is generally understood that it is unacceptable to allow exposure to potential carcinogens to occur (or to continue to occur) until cancer actually develops. Because of the long latency period between initial exposure to a carcinogen and the clinical evidence of human cancer, it is very difficult to judge the risks with any degree of accuracy unless a means of measuring exposure is developed, or until there is a thorough epidemiological evaluation of past exposures to the agents.

Rodent carcinogenesis assays have shown that tumors may develop when the animals are exposed to a wide variety of the antineoplastics in varying amounts. (1) Studies in humans have shown an increasing risk of the development of leukemia in patients treated with alkylating agents for ovarian cancer. (2) But these patients were exposed to a far greater concentration of the drugs than should be present when one prepares or administers the agents. Though some antineoplastic agents have been strongly implicated in causing the development of secondary cancers when given in a therapeutic dose, can this exposure be extrapolated down to the level of exposure which health professionals encounter?

The long latency period between exposure and tumor development does not allow health professionals to rely on the appearance of cancer to show the possible toxicity of our degree of exposure. Other methods of measuring possible carcinogenicity have been developed. Mutagenesis can be measured in a research setting with

the use of the Ames test for mutagenesis (an in vitro bacteriological test) and the measurement of sister chromatid exchange (a cytogenetic evaluation for mutagenesis). Most carcinogens possess mutagenic activity, therefore the use of these assays appears to be a valuable tool in screening for hazardous chemicals.

Studies have been done that report an increase urine mutagenicity (3) or an increased incidence of sister chromatid exchange (4) to occur in nurses who routinely mix and administer chemotherapy. Other studies have appeared in the pharmacy literature that likewise report an increased urine mutagenicity to occur in pharmacists preparing the antineoplastics. (5,6) On the other hand, there are also reports that conclude the risks of handling these agents are minimal in both nurses and pharmacists. (7,8)

Most pharmacies today are preparing the antineoplastics for use by the nurses. The pharmacy profession recently adopted guidelines (9) which suggest methods for preparing the agents in vertical laminar airflow hoods, and further protect the pharmacist or technician by suggesting protective gloves, and perhaps gowns, and emphasizing the importance of proper aseptic technique in protecting the individual preparing the agents. Guidelines also include the proper disposal of the antineoplastics to avoid contaminating other individuals or the environment. Studies report that the urine mutagenicity is much reduced in pharmacists following these guidelines. (5) The question remains whether nurses who primarily administer (and do not prepare) the antineoplastics are at a risk from exposure. A recent study from Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center found no significant mutagenesis in the urine of nurses administering parenteral antineoplastics which had been prepared by the pharmacy. (10) The only protective measures employed by these nurses was the use of disposable gloves.

Suggestions for the safe administration of antineoplastic drugs usually include the following: disposable gloves to be worn during all antineoplastic drug administration activities, the use of syringes and IV sets with Luer-lock fittings whenever possible, special care in priming

IV sets, and proper disposal of all disposable items that potentially came in contact with the antineoplastic drugs during administration.

In addition to these guidelines, it is imperative that all individuals handling these agents receive special training or instruction, that the number of individuals handling these agents be minimized, that those handling these agents be observed for proper technique, and that all acute exposure (such as to spills) be documented. The question of routine medical surveillance of individuals handling antineoplastics has not been answered definitively yet, although medical referrals should be routine for any individual complaining of unusual symptoms which might be related to exposure to the antineoplastics.

Until definitive epidemiological studies can help answer the questions about permissible exposure limits, prudent precautionary measures should be followed by all health professionals handling the parenteral antineoplastic agents...

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## ONS Congress 1984

Toronto, Canada, May 2 thru 5, 1984

### General Registration Information

after April 12, 1984

Member	\$100	\$125
Non-Member	145	170
Student	70	95

On-site registration begins May 2 at 1 p.m.

Nancy Berkowitz  
Oncology Nursing Society  
3111 Banksville Road, Suite 200  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216  
(412) 344-3899

### RONs Newsletter Subscription Form

Please fill out this form, enclose a check or money order for \$5.00 made out to the RONs, and mail to:

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This subscription fee will provide four issues of the newsletter. Current RONs members need not subscribe.

## EDITORIAL

Our symposium, "High Tech/High Touch Nursing: Marketing Ourselves for Success," was indeed a success! National and local speakers helped to broaden our awareness of the direction that nursing on a national scale is moving. These speakers also shared specific ways that we as oncology nurses can impact "the system" and succeed at providing the kind of quality care we believe is important. Many thanks to Ann Reiner and the symposium planning committee for their fine work.

Perhaps an "unsung" participant in the success of the symposium was the American Cancer Society, Washington Division. The Society's contributions included a substantial grant to help the conference plans get underway, donation of symposium folders, handouts, and receiving telephone call inquiries about the symposium. A special thanks to Annie Sakaguchi, RN, MN, ACS Division Program Director, for her patient, considerate and expert assistance.

In my work with the American Cancer Society, I have come to appreciate the way that this volunteer organization serves the community. According to their 1983 Annual Report, about seventy percent of their expenditures was used for direct services to cancer patients, professional education and cancer research. This current issue of the RONS Newsletter contains articles about three specific programs that the American Cancer Society provides for cancer patients and their families here in the State of Washington.

This past year, RONS petitioned for and received assistance from the American Cancer Society. This assistance is the printing and mailing of the quarterly newsletter, the use of office space, typewriters and the Society's mailing address. RONS will soon be entering a time of transition as we apply for local chapter status with the Oncology Nursing Society. I would encourage our continuing to maintain and foster our relationship with the American Cancer Society to coordinate activities and further strengthen the community of oncology nurses here in the Pacific Northwest.

As you have probably noticed, there has been another transition, that of editor-

ship. A big thanks to Judy Moore and Kit Bakke for the excellent work they have done these past years as editors. The newsletter has provided up-to-date information about cancer nursing and has served as a forum for the exchange of ideas, concerns and issues. As editor, I intend to continue that tradition by publishing articles of interest and information.

This year, the symposium highlights featuring summaries of each of the presentations by the main speakers will be included in the newsletters.

I invite you to share your thoughts, ideas and news. •• Ryan Iwamoto, editor



### RONs NEWSLETTER

Published quarterly by the Regional Oncology Nurses with the support of the American Cancer Society.

Editor: Ryan Iwamoto

Letters and articles are requested from all RONS members and other readers on topics or issues of interest.

Submit materials for publication to Ryan Iwamoto, RONS Editor, c/o ACS-WA Division, 2120 1st Ave. N. Seattle, Washington 98109.

UPCOMING LECTURES, WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

What's the Latest in Diagnosis and Therapy  
Apr. 24- May 15, 1984 Tuesdays  
Northwest Hospital  
\$36  
call: 364-0500

10th Annual Cancer Conference:  
Advances in Cancer Nursing in the Last 10  
Years  
May 19, 1984 8:30am-3:00pm  
Seattle Center  
\$45  
call: 543-1047

Head and Neck Course for Nurses  
June 11-15, 1984  
University of Iowa, Iowa City  
\$150  
call:(319) 356-2797

Computers in Nursing Education  
June 11, 1984  
University of Washington  
\$75  
call: 543-1047

Vitality Maintenance for Cancer Nurses  
L. Camero, MFA art therapist  
B. Smith, MA music therapist  
Apr. 5- May 30, 1984 Thursday eves  
Location: to be announced  
\$225  
call: 282-1187; 367-9011

Cancer Nursing Today...Directions for Tom-  
orrow  
Sept. 12-14, 1984  
MD Anderson Hospital, Houston  
call: (713) 792-2222

Computers in Nursing (NURS 293)  
Kathy Morrow, RN, MN; Steven Morrow  
May 5, 1984 9am -4pm  
Everett Comm. College  
\$38.70  
call:Patty Fyfe: 259-7158 x458

5th Annual Western Washington Cancer  
Conference  
June 8-9, 1984  
Rosario Hotel, Orcas Is.  
\$80  
call: 283-1152

Oncology Nursing Society Annual Meeting  
May 2-5, 1984  
Sheraton Centre- Toronto, Canada  
\$100

Breast Health Program  
Riverton Hospital  
call: Carol Sun, RN, MN 244-0180 x279

Call For Abstracts:  
Surviving in the Market Place: A Mandate  
for Clinical Nurse Specialists  
Sept. 13-14, 1984  
Doubletree Plaza, Seattle  
Submission deadline: May 20, 1984  
call: Ann Reiner, RN, MN 624-1144

JOB OFFERINGS:

Clinical Nurse Specialist-Oncology  
Kansas 886 bed institution; 34 bed oncology  
2 years prev. experience, relocation asst.  
salary: mid-upper "30's"  
contact: Lenore Block; Executive Search  
Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 825-6710

RONs QUARTERLY MEETING

May 17, 1984  
7:00 pm  
John Locke Auditorium  
Swedish Hospital Medical Center  
747 Summit Avenue  
Seattle, Washington

Program to be announced