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The Cancer Institute of New Jersey's Oncology Nurses Present Work at 34th Annual Conference
Oncology Nursing Society Congress Explores Research Findings and Patient Education

New Brunswick, N.J., April 30, 2009 – Since Florence Nightingale worked to improve the medical conditions of soldiers, nursing has progressed into a profession of caregivers with both clinical knowledge and technical expertise. Continually building on this proud tradition, nurses from The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) and throughout the country, will present their latest research findings at the Oncology Nursing Society's 34th Annual Congress being held this week in San Antonio, Texas. CINJ is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The conference features presentations and poster sessions on site-specific cancers, prevention, detection, symptom management, treatment advances and other topics dedicated to oncology nursing.

One such presentation features the work of Margaret Joyce, PhD(c), RN, AOCN, interim chief nursing officer at CINJ, and Linda Patrick-Miller, PhD, psychologist at CINJ and assistant professor of psychiatry at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, which highlights lung cancer in patients who experience dyspnea, or difficult breathing. Their focus is the difference between two aspects of that breathing problem: namely, breathing effort, and a reaction to that sensation called breathing distress.

Their study examined whether certain characteristics such as age, gender, anxiety level, medications or other medical problems besides lung cancer were associated with, or potential predictors of, either breathing effort or distress. Results indicated that situational anxiety was weakly associated with breathing effort, and participants who were taking morphine or similar pain medication on a regular basis experienced less breathing distress than those not taking any pain medicine. The team collaborated with nurses from the University of Utah and University of Colorado Health Sciences on the work.

Along with scientific research, CINJ nurses also are presenting information on new methods to educate patients about the care they will receive. One of these communications efforts includes the development of a pre-operative teaching program for patients and families who need to learn complex, technical information about their cancer surgery. The fast pace of the high-volume clinic often makes it difficult for nurses to provide their patients with in-depth information prior to the procedure. Pre-operative education in the form of a resource packet with printed materials and a CD-ROM directed toward the various aspects of a specific surgery will allow patients and families to review the material at their convenience and ask questions at a pre-operative educational visit.

Effective education decreases anxiety, promotes early recognition of adverse events, improves outcomes, increases patient satisfaction and empowers patients to participate in their healthcare, which is why Carmela Hoefling, MSN, APN-C, AOCNP, and CINJ Interim Associate Director of Intra and Extramural Nursing Education Leah Scaramuzzo, MSN, RN, C, AOCN, who also is an oncology education specialist, developed this program.

Scaramuzzo, who also is the chair of the CINJ Patient Education Committee, and her colleagues also are presenting research on the development of an oncology nursing leaders committee within the CINJ

Network of hospitals to provide cutting edge education and information to all oncology nurses throughout the state.

Utilizing the latest technology, online courses for continuing education credits were created and live lectures made available through the CINJ website. A collective listing of health events throughout the state was created, as was a web-based survey tool in order to assess needs and evaluate effectiveness. The team developed this program with the goal to leverage the collective wisdom and experience among oncology nurses within a region, in order to lead the development of a powerful statewide nursing education consortium.

Other CINJ nurses also had their work featured in the form of posters or abstracts, and many participated in leadership roundtable and panel discussions to lend their expertise to the hundreds of participants in attendance. They included: Janet Gordils-Perez, RN, MA, APN-C; Tracy Krimmel, MSN, AOCN, APRN-BC; Marlene McGuire, MA, RN, APN, OCN; Katen Moore, MSN, APN, AOCN; Susan Pillet, MSN, RN, CPNP, CPON; and CINJ Clinical Dietitian Maureen Huhmann, DCn, RD, SCO, who collaborated with McGuire on a dietary study.

About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (www.cinj.org) is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice, quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Flagship Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Major Clinical Research Affiliate Hospitals: Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Morristown Memorial Hospital, Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Overlook Hospital, and Jersey Shore University Medical Center. Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital*, JFK Medical Center, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ at Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. *Academic Affiliate

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