

INSPIRATION

in(t)-spe-'rā-shen *n* 1. a divine or supernatural influence 2. to be an animating, enlivening, or exalting influence on another; to spur one to act 3. to draw forth or bring out

PATRICIA GOLDMAN

President, Ovarian Cancer National Alliance



DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Nine years ago, Patricia Goldman was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. In November of 1992, she began to notice the first symptoms of what eventually was diagnosed as ovarian cancer. When she went to her OB/GYN, he ordered an endometrial biopsy and a traditional sonogram. Neither test indicated a problem. As time went on, her symptoms, including bloating and indigestion, increased and persisted. She had little appetite, yet had gone up four dress sizes in a short period of time. Patricia then consulted her Internist who performed another sonogram, which revealed an abdominal mass, confirming she had ovarian cancer. For treatment, Patricia was referred to a gynecologic oncologist who performed her surgery, which was followed by six treatments of Cisplatin and Cytoxan.

SUPPORT

Patricia knew very little about the disease except its deadly reputation. She quickly learned that she was not alone; few people know much about ovarian cancer. Most women fail to recognize its symptoms and many physicians misinterpret and thus, ignore the early signs. Patricia's first step towards recovery was to educate herself about the disease. She turned to leading cancer organizations and quickly learned that there were no specific support groups for ovarian cancer patients as there were for breast cancer patients.

During her quest for information and support, Patricia contacted Cindy Melancon, the founder and editor of the then-new ovarian cancer newsletter called, *CONVERSATIONS!* Patricia, Cindy and some other activists had begun to communicate with each other, but few had met until the spring

of 1997, when two seminal events occurred.

These events, a two-day stakeholders meeting convened by the Department of Defense (DoD) to launch their Ovarian Cancer Research Program, and a town hall meeting convened by Ovar'coming Together, an Indianapolis-based group, prompted the consumer community to organize a coordinated national effort. From there, Patricia teamed with leaders from seven ovarian cancer groups and joined forces to form the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance (OCNA) in the fall of 1997.

ABOUT OCNA

The primary goal of OCNA is to establish a coordinated national effort to place ovarian cancer education, policy and research issues prominently on the agendas of national policy makers and women's health care leaders.

OCNA is currently comprised of an office staff of eight people and a board of 14 people, including ovarian cancer survivors, family members of ovarian cancer patients and expert physicians. OCNA also has a scientific board of 12 members. Since its foundation, the OCNA has continued to raise awareness of ovarian cancer, the deadliest of the gynecologic cancers.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Ovarian cancer affects women of all ages and races. When asked for words of advice to women everywhere on how to battle this cancer, Patricia says, "It is important to know the facts about the disease and for women to be aware of changes within their own bodies. Early detection is key. Don't let a doctor dismiss you and don't be afraid to speak up."

Most cases of ovarian cancer are not detected until the disease has

reached an advanced stage, when the chances of surviving beyond five years are only 25 percent. Until a screening test is developed, the only way to increase early detection and survival is education.

ABOUT PATRICIA GOLDMAN

Patricia Goldman is a former airline executive, a Kennedy Institute of Politics Fellow, a Capitol Hill staff director, and member of the National Transportation Safety Board. Patricia has served as a member of the Department of Defense Peer Review Panel, the National Cancer Institute Gynecologic Cancer Progress Review Group Roundtable, and numerous other cancer advisory and review committees. She was truly a guiding force behind the creation of the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance and an inspiration to ovarian cancer patients everywhere.

Please send your stories to OA so that others who read them can be filled with hope and inspiration to press on against cancer. Send your stories to kdesatnik@rmed.com or fax to 216.486.7456 marked *Attention Asst. Editor*.

OVARIAN CANCER IS THE DEADLIEST OF THE GYNECOLOGIC CANCERS

Early detection can improve survival rates from 25% to over 90%. Be alert to changes in your body.

OVARIAN CANCER SYMPTOMS

- Abdominal pressure, bloating or discomfort
- Nausea, indigestion or gas
- Urinary frequency, constipation, or diarrhea
- Abnormal bleeding
- Unusual fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Shortness of breath

TAKE ACTION

If symptoms persist, experts recommend a pelvic/rectal exam, a transvaginal sonogram, and a CA 125 blood test. A Pap smear does not detect ovarian cancer.

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