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**ONCOLOGY ASSOCIATES**  
Physician Network Services

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**WITH MEMBERS IN MIND**

**WILL** <'wil > **n.** 1. a : The mental faculty by which one deliberately chooses or decides upon a course of action. 2. a : Diligent purposefulness; determination. **v. tr.** 2. To yearn for; desire. **Idiom: at will** – Just as or when one wishes.

For anyone who has ever been a caregiver, whether administering to a patient, family member or friend, you know that ultimately it is not what you can do to help that truly matters but the desire the **patient** has to move forward. I have come to understand this force as the will to live. It is unique to every living creature big and small, each with its own motivation as to what is precious about life.

As I enjoyed walking through the exhibit hall of the recent 2003 American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting in Chicago, IL, I was suddenly struck by a troubling thought. Was it possible that all of the rows of brightly colored displays, the many carefully chosen speaker sessions, the newest clinical data, the meetings to negotiate agreements and the thousands of pages of glossy literature could all be for naught? I pondered the enormity of the show as I read messages of hope positioned on silk banners with pictures of survivors. I continued in this line of thinking by deciding that were it not for the gutsy survival instincts of the millions of individuals diagnosed with cancer, we would merely be nicely dressed people acting important and talking to pass the time. Buzz words like, "Supportive Care" and "Quality of Life" would have no meaning to someone whose identity has only become a diagnosis.

Fortunately, our work as a medical community is important to the many faces you see in your office each day. Your patients have shared with you their one of a kind personality and revealed to you what it is in life they value most. A purposeful feeling is justified in our activity as a segment of the medical industry because seeming victims have chosen to pursue a course of action in which they believe. Your practice gives patients the tools they need to carry out a strategic plan. Empowered by the will to live, victims transform themselves into brave warriors in a battle for their lives.

Each time we witness this power we are given an incredible gift. We are provided an insight to our own lives – bequeathed by the spirit of the effort one exerts in surviving to the next month, the next week, the next day or even just the next hour. What is the value of a month, a week, a day or even an hour in our own lives with our present mindset? No one allows themselves to truly consider this until they are pressed to it by a dramatic shift in perspective. Caregivers are normally driven to perform and provide for others, their own needs appearing last on the list.

I met up with a woman I know during the ASCO meeting as she was working at her company's booth. My acquaintance presents clinical research data to physicians for their use in determining patient treatment guidelines. As we talked, I noticed she was wearing a black button with a ribbon on her lapel. Upon asking about the button, she told me that her mother had passed away the week before the ASCO show. I expressed my sympathy as well as surprise. I asked her how she could be so brave to attend the meeting in light of her recent loss. Her comment was that she believed it was important to spend her time in a purposeful manner and that meant attending the show to share her clinical findings. I am sure that as she tackled each question and case presented to her during the show, her mother was in the front of her mind.

The significance of life cannot be scientifically measured. However, the impact of the will to live as demonstrated by those who have touched our lives, professionally and personally, can be quantified. **The real value of the gift is reflected in what we choose to do with our time, what we yearn to achieve through our desire.** On a daily basis, we should all honor those who have given us the gift of appreciating life. All of us at Oncology Associates are honored to serve you in your efforts to support your patient's strong will to live.

This column is written by Brent Evans, Editor of the OA Member News and OA's Executive Vice President & General Manager. Contact him with your comments at bevans@rcmed.com.

**GLAXOSMITHKLINE**

**OFFERS NEW CONTRACT!**

A new clinic contract offering from GlaxoSmithKline is now available to OA members. Products on contract include: Hycamtin, Navelbine and Zofran Injection 20ml vials and 32mg premixed bags.

With a start date of **July 1, 2003** right around the corner, Oncology Associates encourages each member to review the advantages and benefits outlined in the contract with their

local GlaxoSmithKline representative. OA members in good standing, who have signed the Participating Member Profile exhibit form, are eligible for this valuable agreement.

Should you need more information, call OA's customer service hotline toll free at **888-732-7352** or email **OncologyAssoc@rcmed.com**. A representative will gladly answer any of your questions.