

SUSAN UNDERWOOD, RN

COMPREHENSIVE CANCER HEMATOLOGY SPECIALISTS, VOORHEES, NJ

"I've found my love in oncology," says

Susan Underwood, Head Nurse at Comprehensive Cancer Hematology Specialists (CCHS) in Voorhees, NJ.

Susan began her nursing career as an LPN in 1969 where she worked in Hawaii until 1973 in hemo dialysis. In addition, she has been a nursing supervisor in the ICU and has worked in her husband's private practice in Maine. In 1986, Susan moved to New Jersey where she worked as an oncology nurse and became OCN certified. She joined CCHS when it was a private practice and has watched the practice experience tremendous growth since opening its doors in 1997.

CCHS is located in a metropolitan area near Philadelphia, PA. Currently, the corporation has three office sites and sees over 100 patients daily. CCHS has five physicians, eleven nurses and 13 support staff members. The practice is proud to be affiliated with Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, PA.



Susan and Judith at the OA Head/Nurse Practice Manager Meeting in Clearwater

According to Susan, "As an oncology nurse, I like the intimacy that is formed when working with the patients and the first line ability to form an ongoing relationship with the patients and their families." Furthermore, she adds, "Oncology Associates has helped tremendously to keep me in touch with what is happening in the oncology world. I rely on OA to act as a spokesperson for political issues, to help our practice anticipate needs and to keep us informed."

Susan also compliments Judith Hall Laughlin, Chief Executive Officer of CCHS

for her dynamic role at CCHS. Judith Hall Laughlin's savvy practice management has helped take CCHS to the next level of growth. Judith has single handedly taken on the office site expansion project of CCHS. The practice is expanding again on June 1st to accommodate patient growth.

Oncology Associates applauds Susan Underwood, Judith Hall Laughlin and CCHS for their dedication to the advancement of cancer patient care.

**From the Desk of****Dr. DiBenedetto, Jr.**

Neutropenia and infection are major causes of morbidity

and mortality in patients undergoing chemotherapy and may be a dose-limiting factor for many patients receiving these agents. Standard practice has been to treat all febrile neutropenic patients with broad spectrum antibiotics even though many of these patients do not have documented infections. In addition, granulocyte colony-stimulating factors, specifically G-CSF and GM-CSF, may also be given in addition to antibiotics in those patients experiencing febrile neutropenia. Febrile neutropenia and its complications drive up the cost of cancer treatment, impair quality of life, result in hospitalization, and can increase

the likelihood of death, particularly in older patients.

The recent development of Neulasta (pegfilgrastim), a long acting granulocyte colony-stimulating factor, has greatly simplified therapy for patients with neutropenia. A single subcutaneous dose of pegfilgrastim during a cancer-treatment cycle can now reduce the duration and clinical impact of chemotherapy-induced neutropenia as safely and effectively as repeated daily injections of widely used G-CSF or GM-CSF. This once-per-cycle injection for prophylaxis of chemotherapy-induced neutropenia is much less time consuming and disruptive to patients receiving chemotherapy than the daily injection of a growth factor. This leads

to an improved benefit and quality of life for the patient and the provider.

Oncology Associates is glad to have contracted with Amgen, the maker of Neulasta, for the mutual benefit of our patients and members.

A practicing oncologist in Providence, RI, Dr. DiBenedetto Jr. directs the Oncology Associates (OA) Advisory Board for establishing treatment guidelines and the selection of product and therapeutic alternatives. Dr. DiBenedetto, Jr. serves on the ASCO Board of Directors in the Community Oncology seat and is active in many other societies and committees specific to the practice of oncology treatment. In his column, Dr. DiBenedetto, Jr. discusses topics pertinent to the community-based oncology practice.