

Health Bulletin

New Patient Guidelines Offer Options On Treating Cancer Pain

(NAPSA)—One-third of cancer patients suffer significant pain. A new set of guidelines offers patients and their doctors much needed information about the most effective ways to treat cancer pain.

The guidelines, *Cancer Pain Treatment Guidelines for Patients*, were developed by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) and the American Cancer Society (ACS). Available in English or Spanish, they are designed to help cancer patients and their doctors work together to reduce or eliminate pain.

“This information will help assure that patients achieve the best possible pain relief,” said Dr. Richard Payne, chief, pain and palliative care service, department of neurology, at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, one of 19 NCCN member institutions. “Often this pain can be substantially reduced or eliminated and patients can be made more comfortable during their battles with cancer.”

The guidelines also help clear up some common misperceptions about the likelihood of drug addiction and abuse among cancer patients, which have resulted in some patients getting inappropriate pain management.

“Reactions to recent disturbing media coverage of drug addicts and painkiller abuse may ironically interfere with important efforts to appropriately manage cancer patients’ pain,” said Robert C. Young, MD, president-elect of the American Cancer Society and president of Fox Chase Cancer Center,



New guidelines help cancer patients make informed decisions about their pain treatment.

another NCCN member institution. “When pain medicines are given and taken appropriately, patients rarely become addicted to them.”

Undertreatment of pain is a significant public health problem, says Dr. Young, who hopes that the pain guidelines will help cancer patients make informed decisions about pain management and thereby improve their quality of life.

The new guidelines are derived from NCCN professional oncology practice guidelines.

To order a free copy of *NCCN/ACS Cancer Pain Treatment Guidelines for Patients* or other NCCN patient guidelines, call the National Comprehensive Cancer Network at 1-888-909-NCCN or the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345.

You can also visit their Web sites at www.nccn.org or www.cancer.org. Requests by e-mail may be made to patientinformation@nccn.org.