

CANCER



in Spring

By Nili Goldberg, National HOSA Region III Vice President

Three years ago Spring J. Tilman was diagnosed with breast cancer.

After what was thought to be a successful surgical removal of several of her lymph nodes, the doctors were convinced that her worries were over. However, two years after the procedure, she was haunted once again with the lethal disease. The cancer had metastasized into her lungs, liver, bones and brain. As time progressed the cancer began to grow more rapidly than the physicians had anticipated and as a result, there was nothing more they could do. For that reason, on September 3, 2002, one of the most deadly incurable diseases known as cancer claimed the life of forty-six year old Spring.

Cancer takes on many shapes and forms and can evolve in almost any part of the human body. Because of the many types of cancers, there are several factors that contribute to its development. While smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer and sun exposure is the main cause for skin cancer, some factors for other types include: lack of physical activity, alcohol, and certain infectious agents such as, parasites, viruses, and bacteria.

Even though cancer is incurable, scientists continue to produce and experiment with a number of treatments. The two well-known treatments for cancer are: radiation and chemotherapy. According to the Cancer Aid Association, in May 2001, the FDA approved a new drug called Gleevec. Gleevec has been proven to treat a rare cancer called gastrointestinal stromal tumor (a cancer of the stomach). Another one of the latest treatments is Herceptin. Herceptin is used to treat breast cancer. It is known to stop cancer cells within the breasts from growing.

Although Spring's condition was terminal, prior to that she received check-ups and when she noticed the first sign of cancer, she immediately visited a physician. The most important thing to do is to get monthly check ups. In addition, preventative measures must be taken. For example, by avoiding smoking, sun exposure, excessive drinking, and by maintaining a healthy diet, your chances of not getting cancer are far greater. As a society and a people, it is time that we start to take care of ourselves so we don't become another victim of this deadly disease.

Spring J. Tilman was my aunt and she shall always be remembered. Even though I am no longer able to do for her, I can help someone else and so can you. **Make a difference! Become active in the fight against cancer by helping to raise money and/or volunteer for this year's national project, the American Cancer Society.**



Mainland Nursing Shortage

Affects Puerto Rico

From an article by Matthew Hay Brown,
San Juan Bureau
February 23, 2003

A record number of nurses from the U.S. commonwealth of Puerto Rico are moving to the mainland. Stateside hospitals are attracting nurses with higher pay and better working conditions. More than 1,100 departed last year. Because states such as Florida are making it easier for nurses to obtain a license to practice, the pace is expected to continue increasing. Puerto Rico healthcare leaders are concerned about the loss of nurses.

Professional and government officials in Puerto Rico are working to develop ways to attract and retain more nurses. The biggest challenge they face is in the salary differences that are offered on the mainland.

Given the more than 32,000 registered or practical nurses licensed in Puerto Rico, the number that left last year represents less than 4 percent of the potential work force. But it's more than twice the number that graduated from island nursing schools. Officials worry about staffing in the future.

The College of Professional Nurses has proposed a variety of measures to bolster the nursing ranks, ranging from promoting the field to high school students to establishing an annual base salary of \$30,000 with bonuses for specialties.

The health care industry is also weighing in on the potential problem. Johnson & Johnson, a major island employer, has initiated a campaign that will include scholarships for nursing students and awards and training programs for professionals.



Teen Driving Risks

From a National Institutes of Health press release
November 8, 2002

Car accidents are the leading cause of death and injury among teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19. Research shows that when parents don't limit when, where, and how frequently their teens can drive, teens' traffic violations and car accidents increase. Research also shows that although parents are in a prime position to influence their teens' driving behaviors, many parents are less involved than they could be.

Risky driving behavior includes unsupervised driving at night, having other teens as passengers, and driving on high-speed roads.

What can HOSA members do?

- Understand the connection between parent requests and your safety.
- Think about the consequences of risky driving.
- Talk about teen safety in chapter meetings.

CDC Publishes Hand Hygiene Guidelines

From <http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/default.htm>
October 2002

The Center for Disease control has published new guidelines for hand hygiene in health care settings. The hand hygiene guidelines are part of an overall CDC strategy to reduce infections in health care settings to promote patient safety.

The biggest change is the regular use of alcohol-based handrubs before and after each patient contact. Improved adherence to hand hygiene (i.e. hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand rubs) has been shown to terminate outbreaks in health care facilities, to reduce transmission of antimicrobial resistant organisms (e.g. methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus) and reduce overall infection rates.

In addition to traditional handwashing with soap and water, the CDC is recommending the use of alcohol-based handrubs by health care personnel for patient care because they address some of the obstacles that health care professionals face when taking care of patients.

Handwashing with soap and water remains a sensible strategy for hand hygiene in non-health care settings and is recommended by CDC and other experts.

When health care personnel's hands are visibly soiled, they should wash with soap and water.

NOTE: These new guidelines will not impact HOSA competitive events for 2003, however, they may be implemented in 2003-04. HOSA members and advisors should review the new competitive events guidelines published in August.