

Appendix #3

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SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
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TO: Departmental Chiefs

FROM: Peter Heseltine, M.D. *PHH/bl*
Chairman, Quality Assurance Committee

Kathy Lohr, R.N. *bl*
Coordinator, Quality Assurance Committee

SUBJECT: HOSPICE/PAIN CONTROL

Recently at the request of Dr. Indenbaum, each of the County Hospitals reviewed the care of the dying and the facility's approach to pain control in cancer patients. Here at the Medical Center the project was assigned to the Quality Assurance Committee. A subcommittee was then appointed and chaired by Dr. Thomas Boylen.

Patients entered into the study had a diagnosis of cancer, 4 or more days of hospitalization, and documented complaints of pain in the nursing notes. The study included a review of 10 patients on the general medicine wards and 15 patients on 4700 Oncology and 14-600 Hematology-Oncology. The findings confirmed the previous assessment and impression of the Hospice Task Force. The preliminary findings were:

1. Pain control in cancer patients was more appropriately handled on the oncology wards.
2. The patients that were reviewed on the medicine wards had inappropriate orders for pain medication in all instances.
3. The documentation in the patients' medical records regarding pain control was inadequate on the oncology wards as well as the medicine wards.

Considering our findings as well as those of the Hospice Task Force, we feel that the lack of medical training in pain control and palliative care is an epidemic problem.