Efforts to Increase Nurses' Knowledge of Adolescent & Young Adult Oncology (AYAO)

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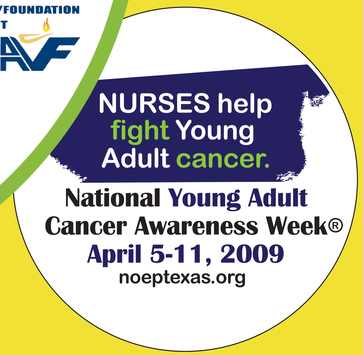
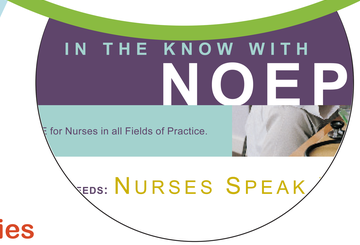
Significance & Background

According to the National Cancer Institute (2006), "cancer occurring between the ages of 15 and 30 is 2.7 times more common than cancer occurring during the first 15 years of life." Cancer incidence in young adults (YA) has increased steadily over the past 25 years, and "survival improvement trends portend a worse prognosis for young adults diagnosed with cancer today than 25 years ago." With tremendous cancer disparities existing within this cancer survivor subpopulation, there is little data about cancer causes, treatment options, and survivorship issues. Cancer is disruptive at any age and stage of life, yet young adult cancer survivors present with unique challenges, issues and lessons.

While most practicing nurses do have some knowledge of cancer, it is definitely lacking; even greater knowledge gaps exist about disparate populations, including adolescent and young adults (AYA). Nurses in all fields of practice must be aware of AYAO to impact care across the cancer control continuum and ensure this distinct population, at the intersection of pediatric and adult oncology, receive the appropriate resources and support services.

NOEP, a Community Program Grantee of the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF), is a project of the Texas Nurses Association/Foundation (TNA/F) funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). NOEP provides continuing nursing education (CNE) to nurses in all fields of practice on cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survivorship. NOEP has served Texas nurses since its 1987 inception and is growing as a national and global leader in nursing education.





Strategies

NOEP plans to improve and continue raising nursing professionals' awareness and knowledge of AYAO in FY10 and beyond.

Assess & Evaluate

> Collect baseline data of nurses' knowledge of AYAO & resources

> Measure nurses' short-term and long-term knowledge, attitude, & behavior changes as a result of completing AYAO CNE activities

Increase Awareness

> Continue incorporating AYAO information & resources into future CNE

> Continue awareness efforts targeted to nursing professionals during NYACAW and other related health observances

Educate

> *Survivorship Suite: Adolescent & Young Adult Cancer*, free CNE slidecast, available Fall 2009

> Free AYAO CNE video in collaboration with the LAF and Alpheus Media, available March 2010

> *Young Adults: The Lost Generation in Cancer Care*, 2010 ONS Annual Congress General Session, May 13-16, 2010, in San Diego, California

Activities

During NOEP's 2009 fiscal year, AYAO information pervaded program aspects to increase awareness and knowledge of AYAO among nurses and nursing students via the following activities:

- *The Impact of Cancer Survivorship: Understanding the Experience*, an online, downloadable curriculum package for nursing faculty and slidecast directly accessible to nursing students
- *Tools for Texans: Helping Communities Fight Cancer*, a conference in Amarillo, Texas, attended by healthcare professionals and community stakeholders
- Participation in National Young Adult Cancer Awareness Week (NYACAW), April 5-11, 2009
  - AYAO article in Spring 2009 *In the Know with NOEP* newsletter, distributed electronically to over 8,000 nursing and other healthcare professionals
  - News alert on website and social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, & Nurse's Lounge)
  - NOEP-designed Facebook "Flair" and "Bumper Stickers" to accompany and enhance social network communications
- Annual *Faculty Training Program*, a week-long intensive training for Texas nursing faculty, partly funded by the LAF, held May 18-22, 2009, at the U.T. M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
- *Young Adults: The Lost Generation in Cancer Care*, a submission for a 2010 Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Annual Congress educational session
- AYAO information, resource, and research enrollment opportunity postings on NOEP social networks