



When You're Weary

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When You're Weary

*When you're weary,
feeling small,
When tears are in your
eyes, I will dry them all...
I'll take your part
When darkness comes
And pain is all around
Like a bridge over troubled
water...
I will ease your mind.*

Cancer care delivery is a complex business. ACCC members worry about economics and strive to improve outcomes through research. Sometimes we provide cures; most importantly, we try to relieve suffering. ACCC recognized the importance of improving pain control and applauded the progress made by awarding the 1997 Clinical Research Award to Betty R. Ferrell, R.N., Ph.D., F.A.A.N., at ACCC's 14th National Oncology Economics Conference recently held in San Diego, Calif.

During her remarks, Dr. Ferrell described her work through the Mayday Pain Resource Center at the City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, Calif. The Center truly epitomizes the interdisciplinary cooperation needed to meet patients' needs. To adequately relieve suffering and pain, the Mayday Center relies on the close cooperation of nurses, administrators, social workers, physicians, and other allied health care specialists. All the staff, not just doctors and nurses, are needed.

Many of our nonclinical members may not realize the importance of their role in the relief of suffering. Indeed, we all contribute. The classic song, "Bridge Over Troubled Water," by Simon and Garfunkel, brings to mind just what we all strive to do for patients and families every day.

All of us act as a bridge each day. What better way is there to describe the plight of our patients than with the words of this song? What better way to describe the health care mission than as a means of helping our patients over a troubling disease? Although it may not receive the same credit or visibility, the relief of suffering is as multidisciplinary an effort as cancer

research or program development. Our members who are not directly a part of daily patient care may not have realized how important their role is in the relief of suffering. In between all the meetings, the budget planning, the staff cutbacks, the managed care contracting war, they too provide solace. They too create a bridge over troubled water. Without them, the bridge could not hold up the day-to-day work of the clinical staff.

Many of our administrator colleagues, nonclinical staff, and sometimes even the clinicians (physicians and nurses alike) may go home at the end of the day tired, drained, and perhaps a little depressed over their own perceived lack of control in their work. This editorial is dedicated to those people. All of you make a difference in the lives of a patient, a family, a community. The difference may not be immediate or easily quantifiable or palpable. Some of you may never see face-to-face the results of your work, but as all of you fulfill a health care mission, you perform "like a bridge over troubled water."

Perhaps because my practice is in rural Illinois, I can readily witness the positive impact that an interdisciplinary effort can have on the relief of suffering. The patients and their families, some of whom I may meet years later, remember and are grateful for what the team provided. This impact on suffering occurs all over the country, in both big city and small town alike. I hope that to those of you who don't receive the clinical feedback I do this editorial provides the knowledge of how important your work truly is. When you go home at the end of the day, whether you realize it or not, you are a bridge over troubled water. You help ease, comfort, and assure those who need help. Your work has value, importance, and real impact on the lives of those suffering with cancer. Your work is meaningful. With that realization, I hope that all of you can place the day-to-day stresses in perspective and realize the goodness of what you do.

James L. Wade III

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