



Drug Shortages Add to the Stress of Treatment

Thank you for the editorial, “Anatomy of a Drug Shortage” (Mayer, 2012), published in the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*. I work at a community cancer center in the Midwest, and we have been forced to refer patients to larger facilities for them to even have a chance at receiving the treatment they require. For example, a patient with hairy cell leukemia was referred elsewhere to receive pentostatin, a drug that would not be supplied to our pharmacy because we did not have the volume of patients to justify it. Fortunately, this gentleman was able to travel several hours away to accomplish this. However, many of our patients would not have the financial or transportation resources to do so.

A large volume of our patients are coming from rural, underserved areas and cannot afford traveling very far to receive much-needed treatment. It is

very frustrating for our staff members, who are doing their best to overcome some of the healthcare disparities in our area. We have to remember that a cancer diagnosis does more than just impact our patients’ physical well-being, they also are dealing with the emotional, financial, and spiritual burdens associated with a life-threatening diagnosis. It is unfortunate that our patients also have to deal with the unwarranted stress regarding drug shortages. The timing of this editorial couldn’t have been more perfect as we were in the

midst of referring a patient to a different facility because of drug shortage.

*Brandi Kincaid, MSN, APRN, NP-C
Nurse Practitioner
Lake Regional Cancer Center
Osage Beach, MO*

Reference

Mayer, D.K. (2012). Anatomy of a drug shortage [Editorial]. *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 16, 107–108. doi:10.1188/12.CJON.107-108

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