

Delaware SGNA Newsletter



March 2009

The President's Note

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In recognition of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, as well as GI Nurses Week and GI Nurses and Associates Day, I would like to thank all of you that work in GI settings around the Delmarva area for your hard work and dedication to your job. How fortunate we are to have such dedicated nurses and associates devoted to the promotion of colon health and early detection of colon cancer! Research, patient education and early screening have been priorities that have helped to detect and prevent many cases of colon cancers. Because of your hard work and dedication the American Cancer Society has seen a steady decline over the past decade of the incidence of colorectal cancer and mortality rates.

However, colorectal cancer is still the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the third leading cause of cancer death in both men and women in the United States according to the ACS. About 148,810 new cases were expected in 2008 and 49,960 deaths were expected with the incidence higher among men and African Americans.

With these figures in mind, I encourage you to concentrate this month on getting the word out to your communities of the importance of screening by making appearances at local health fairs, shopping malls, schools and other facilities where you can reach large numbers of people. Posters and pamphlets are available from the American Cancer Society and other educational facilities to help with this process. Include as much of your staff as possible in the process so that all of you can take part in the rewarding process of education.

Once again, thank you for making a **difference!**

*Kathryn Stranahan, BSN, CGRN
President Delaware SGNA*

Certification...WHY????

By: Karen Bell, BSN, RN, CGRN
Delaware SGNA Treasurer

When the manager of my unit first approached me about getting certified many years ago, my first thoughts were, "GI Certification, you have got to be kidding". No other nurses at Bayhealth had achieved the GI certification. I enjoyed GI, especially Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP). The fear of the unknown and failure of the exam left me apprehensive but the encouragement from management convinced me to pursue what at the time I felt was a high mark.

At the time, Milford Endoscopy Unit had several Gastroenterologists. Dr. Kaplan, encouraged, instructed, and quizzed me during every case we worked together on. I studied the Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA) core curriculum, position statements, standards and guidelines and articles. I had to learn theory and procedures that we did not perform in a small community hospital. The test date came much too quickly, and I went to my first National SGNA Annual Seminar to take the certification test. It was extremely hard. Walking out of the exam, I was sure I had disappointed every one and failed the test.

The remainder of the conference was career changing. There were many opportunities to learn, the newest and best equipment to see, and people from all over the country to meet. I returned to work excited about the conference but depressed and discouraged about the exam. Six weeks later the test results came in the mail. After a few deep breaths, I opened the envelope. CONGRATULATIONS, you passed! I was now a Certified Gastroenterology Registered Nurse (CGRN). Conference attendance is more enjoyable now. The opportunities to learn new procedures, and meet the major company vendors provide an opportunity to handle new equipment and devices. Networking with nurses within my specialty of nursing practice allows opportunities to validate and improve practice.

Certification represents the knowledge I have in gastroenterology has been measured and meets the goal of the American Board of Certified Gastroenterology Nurses (ABCGN) organization. Certification validates nursing qualifications and competence. GI certification exhibits time, effort, and expense to improve knowledge and skills within a specific nursing specialty. Certification demonstrates professional achievements and a desire to improve the quality of patient care. Every five years each nurse that has passed the exam has to maintain certification by submitting 150 hours of GI specific continuing education credits to recertify. This demonstrates continued education within the GI nursing specialty. **Certification is a measure, but it is a measure worth achieving.**

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Future Events-Save the Dates

March 27-29- Delmarva Multi-Regional 11th Annual Education Conference. "Bridging the Chesapeake With New GI Trends"- Dover Shearton, Dover, Delaware. See brochure online at delawaresgna.org.

April 13, 2009- Delaware SGNA Meeting-7pm-Nanticoke Memorial Hospital Cancer Care Center and Christiana Care Education Center-Room 14. Telephone conference also available.

May 15-20, 2009- SGNA's 36th Annual Course. SGNA: Your Gateway to Opportunity. St. Louis, Missouri. [Click Here for 2010 Annual Course Information](#)

June 8th, 2009- Delaware SGNA Meeting-7pm-Nanticoke Memorial Hospital Cancer Care Center and Christiana Care Education Center-Room 14. Telephone conference also available.

September 14, 2009- Delaware SGNA Meeting-7pm-Nanticoke Memorial Hospital Cancer Care Center and Christiana Care Education Center-Room 14. Telephone conference also available.

November 7, 2009 Delaware SGNA Fall Education Day-Dover Sheraton Convention Center. 8am-5pm. Speakers to be announced.

November 9, 2009- Delaware SGNA Meeting-7pm-Nanticoke Memorial Hospital Cancer Care Center and Christiana Care Education Center-Room 14. Telephone conference also available.

