

Sickle Cell Today

USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center

Volume 8 Issue 2

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month

September 2011

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April 1, 2011, marked the end of an era and the beginning of a well-deserved retirement for Stephanie Durggin, RN. For 30 years Stephanie served as a nurse at the University of South Alabama. After obtaining a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of South Alabama, she began her career at USA Medical Center as a staff nurse, working on the medical-surgical unit for 10 years. In September 1990, she joined the staff of USA's National Institutes of Health (NIH) Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center. Stephanie served as a clinical nurse, research nurse and Pediatric Sickle Cell Nurse Coordinator over the next 20 years. Her impact has been tremendous and, no doubt she will be missed.

Stephanie is well known for her willingness to help, her initiative to organize projects, and her work ethic. She initially worked in a clinic with four exam rooms, an office with three cubicles that she shared with eight other nurses, and had a manual typewriter. Despite her humble surroundings, she was able to effectively deliver quality patient care to children and adults with sickle cell disease, establish a

END OF AN ERA

database, create forms for clinical management of patients, and simultaneously conduct six NIH research studies. Her responsibilities also included mixing and administering chemotherapy and infusions to pediatric oncology and hemophilia patients. Her dedication often led her to make home visits and go to any lengths to ensure compliance with clinic appointments and medications. If she saw a non-compliant parent or patient at the mall, at church or even at a traffic light, she would stop and question them about missed appointments! Her efforts were appreciated by many of the families who state that they will dearly miss her.

Education has been an integral part of Stephanie's career. She has been a mentor to many nursing students and served as an instructor in the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Mobile Chapter counselor certification course. Community service was equally important to her. She organized and participated in many health fairs, blood drives, and chaperoned many events for kids with sickle cell disease.

Stephanie feels that the dedication of her co-workers had a big impact on her success. She was honored for her dedication, commitment, and reliability with a retirement reception in March 2011. Stephanie looks forward to spending time with her family and enjoying life! We pray for God's richest blessings for her retirement.

Felicia L. Wilson, M.D.
Director, Division of Pediatric Hematology/
Oncology

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Is Pulmonary Hypertension in Adults with Sickle Cell Disease as Common as Previously Reported?

A clinical study conducted by Gladwin, et. al., was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2004 which reported pulmonary hypertension has a prevalence of 32% in adults with sickle cell disease when defined using a simple non-invasive test called an echocardiogram.

The investigators went on to conclude that, "pulmonary hypertension is common in adults with sickle cell disease and is associated with an ominous outcome". This study was instrumental in promoting the use of the echocardiogram as a screening tool in all adults with sickle cell disease and suggested that when the echocardiogram was abnormal (tricuspid regurgitant jet velocity ≥ 2.5 m per second), independent of clinical findings, treatment of this abnormal finding may be beneficial. In a more recent study, Parent, et. al., published a study in the New England Journal of Medicine July 7, 2011, that showed patients with an abnormal echocardiogram (suggestive of pulmonary hypertension) who underwent right heart catheterizations (gold standard for diagnosing pulmonary hypertension) were frequently misdiagnosed with pulmonary hypertension. When using right heart catheterization as the diagnostic tool, the prevalence of pulmonary hypertension was 6%. This finding has left the sickle cell healthcare community with the questions, what is the optimal approach for screening

those patients who are at risk for pulmonary hypertension? and who should undergo right heart catheterization as a confirmatory test?

The later study is quite significant in that many of our adult clients with sickle cell disease would have been inappropriately treated for pulmonary hypertension based on the earlier study using the echocardiogram for diagnosis. Unfortunately, the data is not currently available that demonstrates how clinicians should proceed. At this point what seems reasonable is when the clinical condition supports a diagnosis of pulmonary hypertension; the echocardiogram is a useful screening tool but can not be used as a diagnostic tool. When clinical findings (shortness of breath on exertion, jugular venous distension, lower extremity edema, unexplained pleural effusions, tricuspid regurgitant murmur, etc.) suggest a diagnosis of pulmonary hypertension, obtaining an echocardiogram as a screening tool is reasonable with subsequent referral to a specialist in the diagnosis and management of pulmonary hypertension to determine the need for right heart catheterization.

Please call (251) 470-5893 for referrals to the USA adult sickle cell clinic and (251) 405-5147 for referrals to the pediatric sickle cell clinic. Remember, the USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center's primary concern is YOU!!!!

Johnson Haynes, Jr., MD
Director, USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center

Dr. Cecil L. Parker, Jr. Distinguished Endowed Lectureship

During the 2008 Annual University of South Alabama Regional Sickle Cell Conference the keynote address of the conference was named the Cecil L. Parker, Jr. Distinguished Lectureship. An endowment was established to support sickle cell education for patients, physicians, and allied health professionals in our community in perpetuity. This tribute to Dr. Parker is for his service to USA and extensive medical career of caring for adults affected with sickle cell disease. In 1986, he started a private practice in Mobile and was shortly named the Director of the USA Adult Sickle Cell Center and continued for nine years. Years after resigning as Director, Dr. Parker continues to support the USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center.

The mission of the USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center is to improve the lives of persons affected by sickle cell disease through state-of-the-art clinical care, clinical research, and education. The establishment of the endowment is a critical step in assuring the necessary educational outreach is and will always be available to serve our patients and healthcare professionals. We believe a well informed healthcare community is essential and translates to optimum patient care and outcomes.

Since inception, the endowment has received donations totaling \$62,000. This has been accomplished through the grass root community efforts of 125 individual donors and six corporate donors to date. Before any monies can be used to support the educational agenda of the sickle cell center, a minimum of \$100,000 is required. From the Center's faculty and staff, we would like to say thanks for all the gifts made thus far into the Dr. Cecil L. Parker, Jr. Distinguished Endowed Lectureship. If you have not made your donation, please do. If you have donated, please continue to give. As a community, let's surpass the initial goal of \$100,000 before April 2012.

Please join faculty, staff, alumni, and friends to honor Dr. Parker by making a gift today to the Dr. Cecil L. Parker, Jr. Distinguished Endowed Lectureship. All contributions are tax deductible.

To make a donation: http://www.usahealthsystem.com/workfiles/physicians_docs/clinics/sicklecellcenter/parkergiffform.pdf

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2011 Touchdown and 2012 Launch USA ANNUAL SICKLE CELL CONFERENCE



Ms. Constance Taylor, President, USA Medical Center Auxiliary Receives Award From USA Sickle Cell Center

Over 70 participants consisting of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered and licensed practical nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and staff attended the 2011 conference. The 2011 conference was the 11th conference conducted by the USA Sickle Cell Center. The conference theme is geared annually to address practical issues in medicine that impact the care of patients affected with sickle cell disease. Cost containment of medical care through effective management practices in an era of healthcare reform best captivates the focus of this years' conference.

The Dr. Cecil L. Parker, Jr., Distinguished Lectureship was presented by Dr. Jane Hankins from St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. She lectured on, hydroxyurea therapy in the management of children with sickle cell disease and presented provocative data demonstrating a decrease in the frequency of pain episodes, acute chest syndrome, hospitalizations, and need for blood transfusions. The conference also featured University of South Alabama faculty. Dr. Allen Perkins, Chairman, Department of Family Medicine, tackled the subject of healthcare reform and its potential impact on today's medical practice. Dr. Johnson Haynes, Jr, Director, USA Sickle Cell Center, discussed the diagnosis and management of multi-organ failure syndrome in sickle cell disease. Emphasis was placed on the need for a multidisciplinary team approach to management. Dr. Abdul Siddiqui, Assistant Professor of Pediatric Medicine, addressed red blood cell transfusion therapy in the management of sickle cell disease, its indications, potential benefits and risk. Dr. John A. Vande Waa, Director of Infectious Diseases, discussed the management of catheter-related infections. Dr. Karen F. Marlowe, Assistant Dean to Auburn University's Harrison School of Pharmacy, focused on opioid risk, evaluation and mitigation strategies.

Many thanks to the USA Medical Center Auxiliary and Center for Healthy Communities, which have provided financial support over the years. Their support has been vital in keeping the cost of the meeting's registration affordable and has enabled the Sickle Cell Center to provide affordable continuing education for healthcare providers in the community we serve.

The annual conference is held in the spring. Congratulations to Dr. Sheryl Falkos, winner of the early bird registration drawing for complimentary admission to the 2012 Annual Regional Sickle Cell Conference. For additional conference information and your chance to win complimentary admission for the 2013 conference, call (251) 470-5893.

Ardie Pack-Mabien, CRNP

THE SOCIAL WORKER'S CORNER

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our clients who achieved educational milestones this year culminating in high school and college graduation. Although each academic accomplishment may lead to a different path in life, they all share a certain commonality. They were all forced to overcome many health-related challenges associated with their sickle cell disease.

Donavan Taylor recently graduated from Davidson High School and has plans to attend Remington College in the fall to pursue studies related to Criminal Justice. Ladarron Jones graduated from Jackson High School and has plans to attend Alabama Southern while majoring in computer engineering. Willie Lyman received a degree in Elementary Education from the University of South Alabama, and is looking forward to a lifelong career in teaching. Laventrice Ridgeway received his undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of South Alabama and will be pursuing graduate studies there this fall.

Again, we would like to congratulate all of our clients on their recent accomplishments and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Until next time, so long from the Social Worker's Corner.

Adrienne Petite, LBSW
SCDAA-MC



5th Grade Top Reader Award, Ella Grant Elementary School Congratulations to Jynique Lane



Fresh New Face

Born and raised in Mobile, AL, Brittany Brown always aspired to join the healthcare field. She began her journey into the field of nursing by volunteering with the American Red Cross and American Cancer Society. As a candy striper, she volunteered at the University of South Alabama Trauma Center, Mobile Infirmary, and Springhill Hospital. Her experiences at these facilities provided the stepping stones for her decision to pursue a degree in the field of nursing.

Brittany graduated from Mary G. Montgomery high school in Semmes, AL in 2004 with Honors. In addition to her honor studies, she was co-editor of the school's yearbook and participated in several organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Young Republicans, Future Business Leaders of America, National Honor Society, and Distributive Education Clubs of America. Many of these organizations helped provide scholarship opportunities for furthering her education.

Brittany attended nursing school at the University of South Alabama where she obtained a Bachelors of Science degree in 2008 and is an alumna of Alpha Omicron Pi Sorority. Since graduating from college, Brittany has earned many certifications, primarily in the area of intensive care medicine. She was previously employed by the University of South Alabama Children's and Women's Hospital, where she worked in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

Brittany joined the USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center's team in July 2011. She will work primarily in adult sickle cell clinical operations and in the coordination and development of the Pediatric to Adult Care Transition Program (PACT) where she hopes to bring her experience to patients transitioning from pediatric to adult care. She is excited about the opportunity to work with patients and families affected by sickle cell disease and is interested in improving their quality of life through nursing practice and patient and family education.



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Save A Life, Give Blood!

September 24, 2011
Franklin Primary Health Center
1303 Martin Luther King Drive
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

The 13th Annual Sickle Cell Center Blood Drive sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center, Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Mobile Chapter, and Franklin Primary Health Center will be held Saturday, September 24, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Franklin Primary Health Center. The Franklin Primary Health Center is located at 1303 Martin Luther King Drive. Forty-nine units of blood were collected at the 2010 blood drive, which positively touched one hundred forty-seven individuals.

Your generous support is greatly needed this year in our effort to meet or exceed the goal established for 2011. Please remember, September is "National Sickle Cell Awareness Month". ***Come and participate in the Blood Drive by "Giving the Gift of Life Thru Blood Donation". Please bring a friend.***

Ardie Pack-Mabien, CRNP

Quick Reminder!

Flu season is just around the corner.

What should I do to prepare for flu season and actions to protect myself and my family?

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. The 2011-2012 flu vaccine will protect against three different flu viruses: H3N2 virus, influenza B virus and H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season. Getting the flu vaccine soon after it becomes available each year is always a good idea, and the protection you get from vaccination will last throughout the flu season.

Contact your primary care provider or local health department for the availability of the flu vaccine and an appointment.

In addition, you can take everyday preventative steps like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. If you are sick with the flu, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading influenza to others.

Who should receive the flu vaccine and when?

Adults and children who have a chronic disorder, requiring medical follow-up or hospitalization due to kidney disease, hemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease), or conditions that compromise lung function should receive the flu vaccine annually.

The optimal time to receive the flu vaccine is October – November and prior to exposure to the influenza virus. The flu vaccine can be given through the month of December and later as long as the vaccine is available.

Reference: www.cdc.gov/flu

Submitted by: Ardie Pack-Mabien, CRNP

Visit the Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center website at:
<http://www.usahealthsystem.com/sicklecellcenter>