



ASSOCIATION of PEDIATRIC  
HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY NURSES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **APHON CALLS FOR INCREASED FOCUS ON TEEN CANCER CARE AND FUNDING OF CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAMS**

*Cancer Research Awareness Month this May offers opportunity for renewed commitment*

GLENVIEW, IL – “Pediatric oncology teams across the county are working every day to improve the care for adolescents and young adults (AYAs) with cancer,” said Deborah Echtenkamp MSN RN CPON<sup>®</sup>, president of the Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON). “But there is more to be done, both for AYA care and to support survivorship programs that monitor patients following treatment for childhood cancer.”

“Pediatric hematology/oncology nurses have long recognized the need to address the complex issues of adolescents and young adults with cancer who live in the fringes between pediatric and adult oncology care settings. Studies show that survival rates are compromised without the comprehensive services needed to face the challenges that lie ahead of them,” Echtenkamp said.

APHON is keenly aware of these issues and addressed many of them in a joint nursing educational workshop with Children's Oncology Group entitled, "Saving the MySpace Generation - Why Age Matters." The workshop described the common oncological diseases found in the AYA population, the treatment challenges, and resulted in recommended strategies to increase access for these patients to state of the art cancer care.

“Pediatric oncology teams across the country are looking for ways to partner with our adult oncology colleagues to help bridge the gap, offering guidance and support through innovative programs as these young survivors make the transition into adulthood,” Echtenkamp continued. “These important programs widen access and support, and they provide a necessary link for wellness in life beyond diagnosis and treatment. We are taking great strides through these programs, but more can be done and we encourage the growth and development of similar programs throughout the country.”

“Survivorship programs allow us to examine, monitor and conduct research on AYAs and other childhood cancer patients in remission, and many pediatric hematology/oncology nurses now work in these programs. Through these programs we are increasing cancer patients’ chances of survival. However, most survivorship programs are still in their infancy and are largely underfunded. Cancer Research Awareness month is a perfect opportunity for America to increase its commitment to supporting research in the care and treatment of AYA with cancer and these programs,” Echtenkamp concluded.

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