

# Cornerstone News

National Cornerstone Healthcare Services

Winter 2007



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## Note from the President



### Welcome aboard...

Brenda Brown

### Brenda Brown puts a friendly face on Human Resources

David S. Espinosa  
President, NCHS

Every successful company needs a human resources (HR) person who can empower employees while helping them perform to the best of their abilities. National Cornerstone Healthcare Services (NCHS) realized that early on, bringing Brenda Brown on board as the sixth employee that the company hired.

A native Californian, Brenda was reared in the state's Central Valley. She received her certification in Human Resources Management from Claremont Graduate University, and subsequently held a number of HR management and administrative positions both with home infusion and other companies. She applied for her job with NCHS at the suggestion of a friend who had heard the company was just getting off the ground and had great potential.

"He told me they could probably use someone with my background," Brenda said. She applied for the position of HR manager and was hired in July 2002.

"I quickly set up an HR program," she said. "I did some creative things to strengthen the company's insurance benefits, and did a lot behind the scenes to make sure our employees had what they needed to do the best job possible and to feel as good as possible about the company and the work they were doing. I'm in the background most of the time, but I'm very much involved in the day-to-day operations of the company."

She added, "I was told working at NCHS would be a great opportunity, and it has been. The company is very fair and generous, and I'm appreciative of the work environment that exists here."

These days Brenda is doing some of the same things she did in the beginning, although her role has expanded as the number of employees has tripled. Her duties include processing payroll every two weeks, writing policies for the Employee Handbook, establishing safety policies and procedures, and maintaining Worker's Comp coverage. She also maintains a dedicated location where sick or injured employees could be treated if need be, notifies employees of their workplace rights, and makes sure that wage orders are posted.

"I have 18 years of HR experience, and now that the company is growing I believe my role is increasing," said Brenda, who lives in Riverside. "My presence creates a liaison between employees and management. I like to think that my overriding role is helping to solve any employee issues that may arise."

"I particularly enjoy recruiting and hiring—finding the person who's best suited for a particular job. That does affect the bottom line, and I think that's what I enjoy most about what I do."

Brenda has been married to her husband, Jim, for many years and has three grown children. Between work and family, Brenda's life is full.

"I love what I do," she said. "And I hope to do it for many more years to come."

## News & Updates



### We were there to "Join NHF for the Journey"

Barbara Chang

The National Hemophilia Foundation hosted their 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida November 1-3, 2007. When we arrived at the hotel we were surprised to be informed "this is the largest Marriott Hotel in the world!" It was important to keep track of which tower you were in because it was quite easy to get lost.

The meeting was well planned and chock full of information for everyone. There were programs for consumers, new families, youth, teens, each type of bleeding disorder, all disciplines of care, women and more. There were breakfast symposia, luncheon meetings and several receptions. Presentations by physicians, panels of experts, care providers, advocacy groups, and reimbursement specialists were offered. If anyone wishes to receive specific information, please contact HANDI by calling 800-42HANDI or email [handi@hemophilia.org](mailto:handi@hemophilia.org).

## Kids Corner

### Peanut Butter Fudge

By Tami Velazquez

#### Ingredients

- 4 cups sugar
- 2 5-ounce cans evaporated milk (1-1/3 cups)
- 1 cup butter (no substitutes)
- 1 10-ounce package peanut butter pieces (1-3/4 cups)
- 1 7-ounce jar marshmallow crème
- 1 cup finely chopped peanuts
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

1.

2.

3.

Our mission at National Cornerstone Healthcare is to enhance the quality of life for people and family members living with hemophilia and other blood disorders. We will always strive to go above and beyond simply "shipping the product", and pledge to provide our customers with the information they need to make informed decisions about their healthcare.



Copies of Audio CDs are also available by contacting HMR Duplications 510-338-0950 or email [hmroakland@aol.com](mailto:hmroakland@aol.com).

The exhibit hall was bustling with excitement. There were 55 booths representing manufacturers of product, non-profit organizations, and service providers. All kinds of educational material were available in addition to both useful and fun items to take home. NCHS incorporated the travel theme by displaying a giant airplane cockpit, with our representatives dressed in typical airline uniforms. Our visitors were given a chance to enter a contest and there were two winners. A young man from Beaufort, South Carolina won a Nintendo DS and a lucky lady from Miami Gardens, Florida took home a new iPod.

For next year you may wish to mark your calendars for November 13-15, 2008 and plan to visit Denver, Colorado.

#### Directions

Line an 8x8x2-inch baking pan with foil, extend foil over edges. Butter foil; set aside.

Butter sides of a heavy 3-quart saucepan. Add sugar, evaporated milk, and butter. Clip a candy thermometer to side of pan. Cook and stir over medium-high heat to 236 degree F, soft-ball stage (about 12 minutes).

Remove saucepan from heat, remove thermometer. Add peanut butter pieces, marshmallow crème, peanuts, and vanilla; stir until peanut butter pieces are melted. Spread into prepared pan. Score into 36 squares while warm. When firm, cut into squares. Cool completely and wrap with plastic wrap. Store in the refrigerator. Makes about 3-1/3 pounds.

You may refrigerate for 2 to 3 weeks or freeze up to 1 year.

## Hemophilia Federation of America News CDC Awards Funding for Blood Brotherhood Program

The HFA has been awarded a \$265,000 grant from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This grant, totaling \$530,000 over two years, will fund programs aimed at providing social support and the provision of information and skills to improve the health of older men with hemophilia. HFA will utilize this CDC grant to launch its HFA Blood Brotherhood Program.

During the past few decades, advances in treatment have extended the life of persons with hemophilia. However, due to tainted blood and blood products they infused during the 1980's, older men with hemophilia face a variety of secondary health issues, including HIV and hepatitis A, B, and C. Additional complications for these men include joint damage, arthritis, and psychosocial consequences associated with their frequent medical problems and painful bleeding episodes.

There is a substantial need for an evidenced-based program that will provide a safe environment in which older men with hemophilia can come together to share their experiences and knowledge about health and quality of life issues as well as to receive education and social support that will enhance their coping skills while improving their health.

To address this need, HFA will implement, oversee, and evaluate the Blood Brotherhood Program. The overall goal of the program is to improve the physical and mental health of older men with hemophilia and to optimize their health care, thus resulting in an improved quality of life. The program will be focused on men with hemophilia who are at least 30 years of age.

Blood Brotherhood activities will occur via monthly information sessions hosted in an online chatroom (available through <http://www.hemophiliafed.org>) and through face-to-face social support sessions occurring through the Hemophilia Federation of America's member organizations.

For more information please contact HFA via [info@hemophiliafed.org](mailto:info@hemophiliafed.org) or visit the website shown above.

Mark your calendars for 2008. The HFA Annual Symposium will be held May 2-4 in Little Rock, Arkansas at the Peabody Hotel.

### Postcard Survey Results

As many of the readers of this newsletter will recall, our last edition included a self-stamped return postcard. The purpose of the card was to determine the reader's level of interest in this publication and to learn about specific areas of interest.

We were very pleased with the larger than expected number of respondents. We hope each of you enjoyed the gift which represented a small token of our appreciation.

The vast majority of readers (86%) indicated the desire to read articles grouped as "news and updates". We will continue to search and publish as much news as possible.

We especially enjoyed some of the personal comments such as "I like all of it", "Doing a good job", "Updates on new products" and "Personal stories"

NCHS always welcomes comments from our readers. Please drop us a line or send an email anytime to express your views. [barbara-chang@nc-hs.com](mailto:barbara-chang@nc-hs.com)

## Wyeth announces BeneFIX® enhancement

Wyeth, a division of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, a division of Wyeth announced it has received approval from FDA for new product enhancements for BeneFIX® Coagulation Factor IX (Recombinant) that will offer patients a simpler and more convenient preparation process compared with the original BeneFIX® preparation process.

A new BeneFIX® feature allows patients currently using the most common dosage strength 1000 international units (IU) to use a lower volume of diluent to administer the product, leading to a lower total volume of infused product. BeneFIX® also offers a new needleless preparation process, eliminating the risk of needle sticks during reconstitution.

"Each of these product enhancements is a first for the treatment for hemophilia B. These new features are designed to enable BeneFIX® patients to spend less time preparing their factor product, to prepare it more safely and to have additional time for themselves," says Gary L. Stiles, M.D., Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.

The FDA approved the following four product enhancements for BeneFIX® Coagulation Factor IX; a 2000 IU dosage strength vial, a needleless reconstitution device, a prefilled diluent syringe and a reduced diluent volume.

## New Oral HIV Drug Close to Approval in Europe

Maraviroc, the first in a new class of oral HIV drugs known as CCR5 inhibitors, is one step closer to becoming available with its pending approval by the European Medicines Agency. CCR5 inhibitors bind to receptors on the surface of cells, stopping HIV from latching on and inserting itself into other uninfected cells and preventing infected cells from replicating. Interestingly, evidence for the potential use of this therapy came from a group of people with hemophilia in Italy who did not contract HIV despite using contaminated blood products. It was eventually discovered that each of them carried a rare genetic modification in a receptor used by HIV to bind to human immune system cells.

Maraviroc, developed by Pfizer Inc., is pending final marketing approval in Europe and accelerated review by regulators in Canada and the U.S. Pfizer anticipates U.S. approval by the end of the year.

Clinical trials have shown that when used in combination with an optimized treatment regimen, Maraviroc is twice as effective in reducing HIV blood levels as the treatment regimen alone. Although the drug does not eliminate the virus completely, studies have demonstrated that it can reduce HIV in the blood to undetectable levels in patients with long-term

infection. In two trials involving more than 1,000 patients, 45% of those who supplemented their existing drug regimen with Maraviroc showed nearly imperceptible HIV blood levels. In contrast, of the patients receiving the existing therapy alone, only 23% achieved undetectable HIV levels. Maraviroc also boosted CD4 immune system cell levels—white blood cells that play an important role in immunity and that are targeted by HIV—in patients, another key determinant of effectiveness.

"The importance of new classes of treatment for HIV cannot be overstated," said Mark Nelson, MA, MBBS, MRCP, with the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London, which took part in the Maraviroc trials. "Maraviroc is an exciting product as it allows us to build oral treatment regimens for the first time that target HIV both inside and outside the cells that the virus attacks."

Source: *The Times (London)*, July 23, 2007

## Important Study Compares Prophylaxis with On-demand Therapy

In a recent publication of the New England Journal of Medicine, clinical data suggests prophylactic therapy is favorable to "on-demand" treatment and is an effective way to reduce joint bleeds.

The data was collected from a five year, multi-center study involving 15 US medical institutions. Marilyn Manco-Johnson MD of the University of Colorado is the lead investigator and author of the report.

Sixty-five boys with severe hemophilia A aged between one and two-and-a-half years old enrolled in the study between August 1996 and September 2000. There was a random assignment into one of two groups. Half of the patients (32) were given recombinant factor VIII infusions every other day (prophylactic therapy). The other half (33) were treated with factor infusions only at the onset of a "clinically recognized" bleeding episode.

There was special emphasis on the elbow, knee and ankle "target joints" which are most often the site of bleeding. Results showed 93% of the children in the prophylaxis group showed normal joint function, in contrast to 55% in the on-demand group. Overall there was an 83% risk reduction for joint damage in patients receiving prophylaxis from an early age.

You may refer to the report "Prophylaxis versus Episodic Treatment to Prevent Joint Disease in Boys with Severe Hemophilia" published in the New England Journal of Medicine August 9, 2007.

## Hemophilia Treatment Center Releases Study Data on Menorrhagia in Adolescent Patients

A team from the Mary M. Gooley Hemophilia Center/Lipson Blood Cancer Center in Rochester, New York, recently published the results of a study to determine the incidence of hemostasis disorders among adolescent girls referred for unusually heavy and prolonged menstrual bleeding (Menorrhagia). After conducting a retrospective, medical record review of 61 consecutive adolescent women with Menorrhagia, ages 11-19, researchers found that 22 (36%) were diagnosed with von Willebrand disease (VWD), four (7%) with a platelet function disorder and one patient with both.

Overall, more than 40% of patients referred to the center had an underlying hemostasis disorder, further confirming the prevalence of these conditions nationwide and the need for more/ additional screening among this population.

The review also detailed manifestations of early bleeding symptoms in the 25 VWD and PFD patients. A menorrhagic first period was experienced by 11 (44%); nose bleeds occurred in 6 (24%); easy bruising in 8 (32%); bleeding of the gums in 7 (28%); and excessive bleeding with procedures in 3 (12%) of patients. Records indicated that the preliminary referrals of these adolescents were made most often by pediatricians and gynecologists. Two patients were referred by their dentist and one by her family physician.

The study, "The Prevalence of Disorders of Haemostasis in Adolescents with Menorrhagia Referred to a Hemophilia Treatment Center" was published in the September 2007 issue of *Haemophilia*.