

**Oncology Massage Alliance**  
**May/June/July 2013**

# Infusion Room Report

## Oncology Massage Program

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# Summary

The general highlights of the Program are as follows:

- We continue coverage at Texas Oncology Midtown, Texas Oncology Central, Texas Oncology North, and New Braunfels Cancer Care Center.
- As part of National Oncology Nurses Week, OMA gave out 48 keychains to infusion room nurses at Texas Oncology Midtown, Central, North; New Braunfels Cancer Care Center; Texas Cancer Center, Austin; and the Leila Eisenstein Breast Center in Medford, OR.
- On June 1st, OMA participated in the Relay for Life in Medford, Oregon. Our Executive Director and a new OMA therapist helped get the word out about OMA. They set up a tent and displayed OMA info. They also offered free massages for 5 hours and met lots of people. This Relay is held at the south Medford high school stadium annually, has over 800 people attend and raised almost \$200,000 for the American Cancer Society. It's a 24 hour relay so 'teams' set up tents and camp out.
- OMA participated in the State's Wellness Fair on Thursday, June 6th, "Be Your Own Hero," in downtown Austin. The fair included information about wellness, health and physical fitness. Nearly 800 - 1,000 State employees attended this event. OMA's therapists and board members had a great time networking with healthcare practitioners and State employees as we talked about the efficacy of oncology massage.
- Four new therapists became members of OMA:
  - Lisa Johnston from Medford, Oregon;
  - Monica Johnson from Ashland, Oregon;
  - Lisa Georgeson from Austin, Texas. Lisa has started working at Texas Oncology Central, and Midtown;
  - Ashley Nutt from Austin, Texas. Ashley will start working at Texas Oncology Central in August.

# Infusion Room Stories

Each person we meet in the infusion room has such a special story and each one that we reach out to touches us deeply. By providing compassionate touch and a safe space for that person to simply relax, talk or just close their eyes and feel another's gentle touch is a great honor for us to connect with them and give them hope to just believe in their future. Here are some of their stories.

I gave a hand and foot massage to a middle-aged woman with multiple myeloma. She had just started her chemotherapy treatment for the day. She told me that she will be receiving chemo four times a week! She stated after the massage finished, "You must have released a lot of endorphins. I feel great!"

I gave a foot massage to an elderly man who was receiving chemotherapy infusion. He was not experiencing any neuropathy. As I massaged his feet, he slept. He was very relaxed! The pressure was gentle. He gave a big smile when it was finished.

I gave a foot massage to an older woman who was on her fifth month of chemo/radiation regime. She was experiencing peripheral neuropathy in her hands and feet. I applied gentle pressure to her feet; she also offered to donate to our organization. She was very appreciative for the massage.

I gave a foot massage to a middle-aged woman who has a form of leukemia. She bruises easily so I applied very gentle pressure to her feet. She was very thankful for the gentleness of my touch.

I massaged the shoulders and neck of a caregiver. Her husband (the patient) refused the massage, but encouraged his wife to receive my touch. She was very thankful because she was stressed out and the massage helped her relax a bit.

I gave a foot massage to an elderly woman; she was not experiencing any neuropathy. I applied gentle pressure to the feet; she talked as I massaged her feet. She was telling me, in her soft voice, about her cancer treatments. She said that she was glad that I was there for her – listening to her – and also for giving her a great foot massage!

I work with this woman almost every week. She is doing so much better now that her psoriatic arthritis has dramatically improved with the steroid treatment. She can actually make a fist; prior to the steroids she could hardly tolerate having her hands touched, the joints were inflamed, and she was in a lot of pain. Today she laughs and jokes that her "fingers aren't swollen any more, they're just fat." Her chemo treatment and side effects are stable. She received a Level 2 hand and foot massage. "I don't know how you do it but this massage relaxes me so much."

An elderly gentleman was in for his second chemo treatment for metastasis to his

legs. He stated that the neuropathy is increasing and is greater in his feet than hands. Once again we had a good conversation about fishing, a favorite past time for both of us. I provided a Level 2 hand and foot massage. He was very appreciative and wanted to tip me. When I explained that I didn't take tips but would be happy to forward the money to OMA, he handed me a \$100 bill!!

I gave a gentleman in his 70's a foot massage. This is his first chemo treatment, but he also has diabetes, and peripheral neuropathy in his feet. He experiences a lot of pain. During the massage, he remarked at first that he couldn't feel anything, but after awhile, he said he could feel patches of feeling on his feet.

I gave a woman a foot massage. This was her first time receiving chemo. She relaxed as we talked during the session. She said how good the gentle touch felt. She does not have neuropathy. She was very appreciative - her feet felt much better after the massage.

I gave a hand massage to a middle-aged woman who was diagnosed in January with colon cancer. She had a very hard time with her first several rounds of chemotherapy treatment. Today's protocol seemed to be better for her. She had never had a massage before and she was very happy to receive a hand massage from me. I used gentle pressure – Walton scale pressure level 1.5-2. She thanked me for the hand massage!

I gave a foot massage to a middle-aged woman who was diagnosed with breast cancer. I used light, gentle pressure – Walton scale of pressure – 1.5. She was pleasantly surprised that light pressure could feel so good! She was very appreciative for the massage.

I gave a hand massage to a middle-aged woman who was experiencing neuropathy (numbness) in her fingertips. She wanted to sleep through the massage. I used a gentle touch but also focused on her fingertips with a bit more pressure, and slow, even strokes. She closed her eyes as I massaged her hands. When I was done, she opened her eyes and said that she dreamt that she was at her house. She felt very peaceful during the session. She was very thankful for the gentleness of my touch.

I gave a foot massage to a young woman who was receiving the "Red Devil" infusion. The nurse looked at me and smiled – she was glad that I was there at the same time as she was starting the infusion. "Perfect timing!" she said. The young woman was a bit nervous; the foot massage and conversations helped to distract her and also help her relax. I applied gentle pressure to the feet (Walton pressure level 1-2); she talked (even laughed) as I massaged her feet. Her father and a friend were with her and they were both very glad to see me. All four of us had great conversations, which made the time go by quickly and before you knew it, the infusion was over! She said that she was grateful that I was there for her and also for giving her a great foot massage! The nurse also thanked me and we both shared a smile together.

I gave a hand and foot massage to a middle-aged woman receiving chemo for ongoing bone cancer. There was a lot of emotion around in her family with different, conflicting opinions about whether she should continue treatment or not. The gentle massages helped her relax. She looks forward to the stress release that these massages give her.

I gave a gentleman a foot massage. He was hesitant at first, but then agreed to the massage. He was surprised at how good it felt. He closed his eyes, and he had a big smile on his face.

Today was a woman's first day of chemo. She's an elderly woman, and had felt nauseous beforehand. I used gentle pressure. She said the hand massage helped her relax and the nauseous feeling disappeared for a bit. She was so happy.

# Monthly Statistics

Since the program began in February, 2011, we have been able to touch many people in so many ways. Below is a table outlining the program statistics for May, June and July, 2013.

## May Statistics

	Texas Oncology Midtown	Texas Oncology Central	New Braunfels Cancer Care Center	Texas Oncology North	TOTAL
Patients touched	33	16	30	23	<b>102</b>
Caregivers touched	5	1	10	5	<b>21</b>
Staff touched	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Massage Therapists worked	3	3	1	1	<b>8</b>
Total days in Infusion Room	8	5	4	5	<b>22</b>
Volunteer hours		8.5	4	11	<b>23.5</b>
OMA paid hours	16.5	0	0	0	<b>16.5</b>
Donations	\$412.50	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	<b>\$512.50</b>

## June Statistics

	Texas Oncology Midtown	Texas Oncology Central	New Braunfels Cancer Care Center	Texas Oncology North	TOTAL
Patients touched	21	26	24	5	<b>76</b>
Caregivers touched	0	0	6	2	<b>8</b>
Staff touched	0	0	4	0	<b>4</b>
Massage Therapists worked	3	62	1	1	<b>67</b>
Total days in Infusion Room	6	6	3	3	<b>18</b>
Volunteer hours		13.25	7	5	<b>25.25</b>
OMA paid hours	11.5	0	4	0	<b>15.5</b>
Donations	\$287.50	\$40.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$327.50</b>

## July Statistics

	Texas Oncology Midtown	Texas Oncology Central	New Braunfels Cancer Care Center	Texas Oncology North	TOTAL
Patients touched	40	35	0	14	<b>89</b>
Caregivers touched	7	3	0	0	<b>10</b>
Staff touched	0	4	0	0	<b>4</b>
Massage Therapists worked	3	3	0	1	<b>7</b>
Total days in Infusion Room	11	9	0	4	<b>24</b>
Volunteer hours		18.50	0	6.5	<b>25</b>
OMA paid hours	22.5	0	0	0	<b>22.5</b>
Donations	\$562.50	\$40.00	\$0.00	\$15.00	<b>\$617.50</b>