

Oncology Massage Alliance  
October/November/December 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 Texas Oncology Round Rock.
- In December, the lead therapist at New Braunfels Cancer Care Center, Mary Liebermann, notified us that she would not be able to continue massaging there. Until we find another OMA therapist in the New Braunfels area that can go there, that location is temporarily closed.
- The OMA Board met in November and the OMA Operations Committee met in November and December.
- In November, Tracy Walton, a highly regarded oncology massage educator and author, came to Austin and held a 4 day conference, Oncology Massage Therapy: Caring for Clients with Cancer. Geri Ruane assisted and gave a presentation about OMA. OMA provided three educational stipends of \$100 to help three therapists attend this workshop. Through this workshop, we have added to our roster! We have two new therapists, and three that are interested in being a part of OMA. Susan Prins received a stipend, and attended Tracy's workshop. She is working at Texas Oncology Midtown on Tuesdays. Martha Paull also attended Tracy's workshop. She is going to Texas Oncology Central on Tuesdays.

## 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 gently massaged the feet of a younger woman. I saw her a couple of weeks ago and the skin on her feet was so dry and cracked. Her feet today were so well moisturized, a pleasant surprise! She took my suggestions about taking care of her feet and applying lotion to them. Her feet looked so much better. She thanked me for the tip!

I gave a foot massage to a woman, who at first refused my offer of a complimentary hand or foot massage. One of the nurses encouraged her to have a massage and the woman agreed. We talked a lot about her work; she told me that this is the first time in her life that she isn't working (and she was emotional about it, as she told me). She said that she enjoyed the gentle touch of her foot massage. She felt more relaxed.

I gave a foot massage to a woman, probably in her 60s. We talked a bit about her health issues, her diagnosis, her family and we even shared cat stories. She was interested in the benefits of oncology massage and OMA's presence at Texas Oncology Round Rock ("... they should have massage therapists on staff!") She felt more relaxed at the end of the session and her feet felt much better. She enjoyed the conversation as well as the gentle touch. She was very appreciative for the massage!

I massaged a 62 year old gentleman. He said he has neuropathy in his hands and feet. I gave him a hand massage. After the massaged he could open and close his hands without pain. The massage made a big difference!

I gave a woman in her 50's a shoulder massage. She's a caregiver - her husband is the patient. Her shoulders and neck were very stiff. She said, "The massages really help, because sitting and being in the infusion room is stressful." She enjoyed the massage.

I gave a foot massage to a middle-aged woman who was wearing a compression sleeve on her right arm because she has lymphedema. She told me that she has bunions on her feet and that her feet could use some TLC! We talked during the session; I applied gentle pressure to her feet (Walton scale – level 2). During the session, she told me that she had a headache before I started massaging her feet and now, she felt that her headache was gone. She was happy to be headache-free.

I gave a hand massage to woman in her 60s. She said, "Wow. I feel like it's my birthday!" She was so surprised to be offered a complimentary hand massage. She has slight neuropathy in her fingertips; after the massage, she said that her fingers felt much better.

I massaged the hands of one of the infusion nurses today. Her hands were aching a lot. It was a brief hand massage (with some stretches) but the nurse said that it helped her and relieved some pain in her hands. She gave me a hug and a big smile!

I gave a caregiver a hand massage. He was a gentleman in his 50's. He is a cancer survivor, but still suffers from neuropathy. After the massage, he was surprised at how much better his hands felt!

I gave a woman in her 50's a foot massage today. She said she could feel a "tickling" sensation going up the side of her head as I was working on the first foot. She also said that at the end of the massage, she had more sensation in her feet that she thought she did before the massage. She enjoyed the massage, and thanked me at the beginning and end of the session!

A middle-aged woman asked the nurse if I could give her a hand massage. She needed to relax. I used gentle pressure. She closed her eyes during the session. She didn't have neuropathy, just anxious. The nurse was very appreciative, too. The patient slept at the end. I didn't wake her up!

I gave a foot massage to a woman in her 50's. This was her first treatment. She closed her eyes and relaxed during the massage. She was very surprised and grateful for the massage. Her husband remarked that he didn't know if it was the drugs or the massage, but he's never seen her so relaxed!

I massaged the hands of a middle-aged woman who just finished receiving chemotherapy. She wanted to have a hand massage, so she waited for me! She was conversant during the session – asked questions about oncology massage and lymphedema. We had a good conversation. She was appreciative for the gentle touch.

I massaged the hands and feet of a 65-year old male patient who was receiving chemotherapy. He was hesitant at first to receive either a hand or foot massage because he had moderate-severe neuropathy in his fingers and toes. But, he agreed to receive a hand massage. I applied a gentle touch pressure, using level 1 Walton scale. The results were miraculous! The pins and needles that he had been experiencing in his fingers for the past two weeks totally disappeared. He then agreed to have me massage his feet, with the same result! The neuropathy in his toes disappeared. He and his wife were thrilled; I spent 35 minutes with this patient and showed his wife how to massage her husband's hands and feet. They were both very appreciative for the time that I spent with them. The patient was very relaxed.

I massaged the hands of a female patient today. She said that she never had a massage before and that she didn't feel that she deserved one. She said that she felt guilty having a hand massage today. However, once I started massaging her hand, she exclaimed that it felt wonderful! We talked for a bit about her health, good foods to

eat, etc. She said that she felt much more relaxed after our session. She was appreciative for the gentle touch and for our conversation!

I gave a woman in her 40's a foot massage. She has neuropathy in her toes (numbness). I used pressure 2, and focused on each toe, mindful of her numbness. After it was over, she said that she could feel her toes again! She was very 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 October, November and December, 2013.

## October Statistics

|                             | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Midtown</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Central</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>North</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Round Rock</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Patients touched            | 33                                | 21                                | 12                              | 14                                   |
| Caregivers touched          | 5                                 | 0                                 | 3                               | 0                                    |
| Staff touched               | 0                                 | 0                                 | 1                               | 0                                    |
| Massage Therapists worked   | 3                                 | 3                                 | 1                               | 1                                    |
| Total days in Infusion Room | 5                                 | 6                                 | 2                               | 3                                    |
| Volunteer hours             | 0                                 | 10.75                             | 3.5                             | 6.25                                 |
| OMA paid hours              | 12.75                             | 0                                 | 0                               | 0                                    |
| Donations                   | \$318.75                          | \$20.00                           | \$55.00                         | 0                                    |

## November Statistics

|                             | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Midtown</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Central</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>North</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Round Rock</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Patients touched            | 50                                | 30                                | 4                               | 19                                   |
| Caregivers touched          | 2                                 | 0                                 | 1                               | 0                                    |
| Staff touched               | 0                                 | 1                                 | 1                               | 0                                    |
| Massage Therapists worked   | 3                                 | 4                                 | 1                               | 2                                    |
| Total days in Infusion Room | 11                                | 9                                 | 2                               | 4                                    |
| Volunteer hours             | 0                                 | 18.25                             | 2.25                            | 8.75                                 |
| OMA paid hours              | 23.75                             | 0                                 | 0                               | 0                                    |
| Donations                   | \$693.75                          | 0                                 | \$23.00                         | 0                                    |

## December Statistics

|                             | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Midtown</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Central</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>North</b> | <b>Texas Oncology<br/>Round Rock</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Patients touched            | 56                                | 70                                | 10                              | 8                                    |
| Caregivers touched          | 0                                 | 5                                 | 3                               | 0                                    |
| Staff touched               | 0                                 | 5                                 | 0                               | 0                                    |
| Massage Therapists worked   | 4                                 | 5                                 | 1                               | 1                                    |
| Total days in Infusion Room | 12                                | 14                                | 3                               | 2                                    |
| Volunteer hours             | 0                                 | 23.25                             | 4.5                             | 4.75                                 |
| OMA paid hours              | 23.20                             | 8                                 | 0                               | 0                                    |
| Donations                   | \$585.00                          | \$20.00                           | \$5.00                          | 0                                    |



# Donations

| October  | November | December | TOTAL     |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| \$373.75 | \$716.75 | 610.00   | \$1700.50 |