

TO MEDIA:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MANAGING EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY TOPIC OF BREAST CANCER EDUCATION

GREENSBURG, PA, January 20, 2010 ... Excela Health's Breast Cancer Education and Support Group will sponsor a free community education program on **"Medications and You,"** 6 p.m., Tuesday, February 2, Conference Room D, First Floor, Westmoreland Hospital. Catherine Bourg, Pharm. D. and Anastasia Roberts, Pharm. D., who are completing pharmacy residencies at West Virginia University, will serve as guest speakers.

The program will highlight tips on how to manage the side effects of chemotherapy. According to Bourg, chemotherapy drugs impact patients in different ways. "Some common side effects include hair loss, nausea and vomiting, fatigue and anemia, pain or neuropathy, and appetite changes," she said. "But the good news is that there are ways to counteract these side effects that can make treatment and recovery easier for patients."

"With the availability of new and enhanced drugs, cancer patients are experiencing fewer or less severe side effects along with more positive results following treatment," Bourg added. "In those instances where side effects are likely to be experienced, pre-medications may be given prior to the actual chemo treatment. These, in turn, can be positive in counteracting the side effects of the actual chemo administration. Other medications are prescribed following treatment that can be taken at home."

Bourg's overall advice to patients is to ask questions and be informed about the medications that are prescribed for them. "Do not be afraid to ask," she emphasized. "This can be an overwhelming time for patients and their families, so it is extremely important to know why and how medications work. Patients need to know what is the best way and time to take their medications to get the best results. Effectiveness is often based on timing and consistency."

Through this seminar, Bourg and Roberts hope to provide area cancer patients and their

families with additional knowledge and support to help guide them in managing their health and cancer care with a pro-active approach. A question and answer session will follow the formal presentation.

For more information on breast health, cancer care, or to register for this program, contact Excela Health's Call Center, toll-free, 1-877-771-1234.