



A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH CANCER PAIN

It is estimated that each year over one million Americans develop cancer and that over half a million persons die of the disease. Pain is the most common and most feared symptom of cancer. Although treatments exist to effectively manage nearly all cancer-related pain, many people do not receive adequate pain relief. Doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals may not be well trained in pain management. Also, health care professionals and patients avoid pain relief medications because of exaggerated fears of addiction and side effects. The facts are that most side effects can be managed, and addiction rarely occurs in persons with cancer who take medicines for pain control. These concerns should never be a reason not to treat pain. Knowledge, good communication, and caring are needed to make sure persons with cancer-related pain receive the most effective pain care.

First developed by the Iowa and Wisconsin Cancer Pain Initiatives, adopted by Cancer Care, Inc., and revised by the American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives in 1998, the ***Bill of Rights for People with Cancer Pain*** is meant to encourage persons with cancer, their loved ones and professionals to learn the facts about pain and its treatment.

PERSONS WITH CANCER PAIN HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- **Have their pain believed by health care professionals, family, friends, and others.**
- **Receive effective treatment regardless of the cause or severity of their pain.**
- **Be treated with respect by all health care providers at all times.**
- **Receive medication for pain without being made to feel like drug abusers.**
- **Have their pain, including pain as a result of procedures and treatments, prevented or minimized.**
- **Have timely and accurate information about pain and treatment options.**
- **Participate actively in their treatment plans.**

PERSONS WITH CANCER PAIN HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- **Tell their healthcare providers how much they hurt, where they hurt, and what their pain feels like.**
- **Tell their healthcare providers of any concerns they have about their medications and/or other treatments**