

Join registry to ease nightmares of child — and parent

Michael Millicia's childhood nightmares are not the green-eyed creatures found underneath most children's beds. Instead, they come in the form of doctors and nurses.

"They come in rounds, like 10 of them, and he covers himself up with a sheet or plugs his ears and shuts his eyes and pretends they are not there," said mother Joan Millicia of Rochester.

Michael, 5, was diagnosed with leukemia on his fourth birthday. That day began a three-year treatment that has included a series of hospital stays, chemotherapy and lots of "pokes."

"He used to be very bright and sunny and trusting, and now he's not so trusting of people," said Joan Millicia. "He's going through something that children really shouldn't have to go through."

The hope for Michael and many others suffering from leukemia, aplastic anemia, or one of 60 other blood-related diseases is a bone

marrow transplant. Unfortunately, the odds of finding a bone marrow match could be compared to finding a needle in a haystack — estimated at 1-in-100 to 1-in-1 million. While Michael waits to find a bone marrow match, he often needs blood transfusions to replace the red cells and platelets which are affected by his disease.

Oakland County residents will have a chance to help on Friday, July 1, by participating in the Gift of Hope Drive. The first 450 that schedule an appointment to donate blood at one of Red Cross' nine donor centers will be entered into the National Marrow Donor Program Registry.

Event participants must donate blood to be entered into the registry. If participants are deferred as blood donors, but are still eligible to enter the registry, they will be referred to a future bone marrow testing event.

In Oakland County, Red Cross

donor centers are located in Bloomfield Hills and Oak Park. Drive hours are 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-582-4383.

Following are locations for the Bloomfield Hills and Oak Park Donor Centers: Bloomfield Hills, 2388 Franklin Road (corner of Square Lake Road), and Oak Park, Crowne Pointe Building, 25900 Greenfield Road (at Lincoln Road).

While costs for entering the registry can be as much as \$150 per person, participants in the Gift of Hope Drive are entered in the registry at no cost.

The event is financed by My Friends Care and the Southeastern Michigan Marrow Donor Program.

The Gift of Hope Drive will help boost blood inventories leading up to the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

To receive a bone marrow transplant, a donor must be found

whose marrow matches that of the patient. If match cannot be found through a brother, sister or cousin, a match must be found with an unrelated stranger.

At the Gift of Hope Drive, the small amount of blood needed for registry testing will be removed when participants donate blood. Those wishing to participate in the drive must be between the ages of 18-55, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in general good health.

Giving blood and registering for the National Marrow Donor Registry is simple and takes around 1½ hours. The procedure includes registration; a brief medical history; and having pulse, temperature, blood pressure and hemoglobin checked.

The actual blood donation takes about 10 minutes and is relatively painless. After their donation, donors are asked to have some juice and cookies to restore blood fluid levels.

The lab results are stored in the National Marrow Donor Program's main computer, which is searched on behalf of patients with fatal blood diseases. Only a small number of potential donors receive a call informing them they are preliminary matches.

In the last six years, 11,814 people from southeastern Michigan have entered the National Marrow Donor Registry. Last year, the one millionth donor entered the National Registry.

Lawmakers call for managing pain

As the assisted suicide debate drags on, state lawmakers on both sides agree there should be better "pain management" by medical care providers.

Sen. Fred Dillingham, R-Fowlerville, won 34-0 approval Tuesday when he asked the Sen-

ate to agree to House amendments in two of his pain management bills.

They are part of a five-bill package, with three bills coming from the House.

"The biggest change is that they've increased the membership and removed dental hygienists," Dillingham said of his key measure, Senate Bill 961.

That measure would set up, within the Public Health Code, an interdisciplinary advisory committee on pain and symptom management. Members will come from the Michigan boards of Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine and Social Workers.

The panel is to provide a forum

on health care for hospices, gather ideas from a public hearing, develop model care curricula on pain and symptom management, work on continuing education plans for health care professionals and report to the Legislature.

Meanwhile, the Michigan Supreme Court has set Oct. 4 for oral arguments on the constitutionality of a state statute making assisting a suicide punishable as a four-year felony. That Dillingham-sponsored measure was used to prosecute Jack ("Dr. Death") Kevorkian.

Refer to Senate Bills 961-962 and House bills 5335, 5337 and 5339 when writing to your legislator.

County offers cancer screenings

Screening for breast and cervical cancer is available at the Oakland County Health Division's Southfield office.

Services are available for women 40 or older, with a low or fixed income. Insurance is billed if

available. The center receives federal funding for mammograms, breast exams, pelvic exams and pap smears.

To make an appointment, or for more information, call 424-7100.

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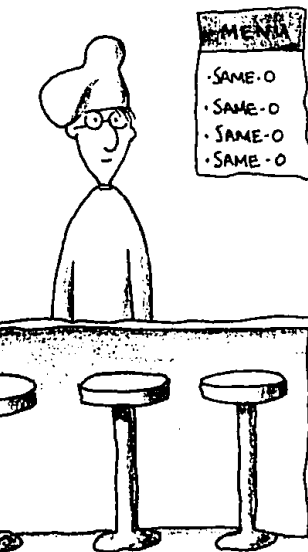
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