

DEVELOPMENT OF A HEPATITIS C EDUCATION AND SUPPORT GROUP

Jennifer L. Rodis, Pharm.D.¹, Pamella Kibbe, C.N.P.²

¹Pharmacy Practice and Administration Division, College of Pharmacy, The Ohio State University, USA;

² Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Digestive Diseases, The Ohio State University Medical Center, USA.

The need for a local support group for patients undergoing treatment for Chronic Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) was recently recognized by a community pharmacist and a nurse practitioner in the Central Ohio area. These two health care professionals have been collaboratively providing support and education to this patient population since July 2004 through referral from a local gastroenterology medical practice. Through one-on-one visits, the need for additional support and understanding among this patient population was apparent. Contact and collaboration with local health departments, medical care facilities, and the American Liver Foundation resulted in a gathering of materials and resources to assist with implementation of the Central Ohio Hepatitis C Support Group. The first meeting of this group was held on February 16, 2005. During the first six months of meetings, the facilitators are keeping notes and conducting surveys of participants and patients to identify the main barriers and successes of the implementation process. This project will provide materials, resources, and tips to developing and implementing a support group for patients who are dealing with the side effects of therapy for HCV and/or other diseases which require therapies resulting in bothersome side effects. Educational topics and formats preferred by participants, effective marketing strategies, meeting organization, and sources of external funding will be determined and reported.