Barbara Given
PhD, RN, FAAN

According to the American Cancer Society, more than half a million Americans died of cancer in 2010. That’s more than 1,500 people a day, or nearly one of every four deaths.

During the past decade, the use of oral cancer-fighting medication is transforming how oncology care is delivered. About 10 percent of cancer chemotherapy is provided to patients orally, and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network predicts that by 2013, the rate will increase to 25 percent.

As the use of oral chemotherapy continues to rise, Dr. Barbara Given has discovered many patients fail to properly take the oral antineoplastic medication - a significant clinical problem that can result in complications and disease progression. Continued treatment for the prescribed duration and adherence to prescribed medications has become a challenge to patient cancer care management.

Dr. Given’s current intervention aims to enhance an automated telephone symptom monitoring system by helping chemotherapy patients self-manage the severity of their symptoms from home so that they can continue to adhere to the medications. When patients experience severe symptoms, the system documents the severity and the oncology clinic is then informed of the patient’s urgent symptom severity. The system also reminds patients when to take their oral medications.

The long-term goal of Dr. Given’s research is to identify how patients can be assisted to manage patient adherence and symptom management in this new paradigm of cancer care.

As a pioneer in oncology nursing, Dr. Given has successfully obtained funding from the National Institutes of Health for more than 30 years. Throughout her nursing research career she has focused on long-term cancer care, symptom management, family home care, and cancer care/intervention.

Other topics of interest include chronic illness, problems of the elderly, and health services research that includes cost and service utilization.