

November 17, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: GENIE ALICE CAUSEY
(662) 377-2371

EDWARDS NAMED SOCIAL WORK LEADER OF THE YEAR

TUPELO, Miss.—Cindy Edwards, LMSW, OSW-C, oncology social worker at the North Mississippi Medical Center Cancer Center, was recently named Social Work Leader of the Year by the Mississippi Society for Social Work Leaders in Health Care.

Edwards was nominated by Paula Turner, director of the NMMC Cancer Center. “Cindy is one of the most creative, energetic and compassionate people I know,” Turner said in the nomination. “If there is a problem, Cindy can find a way out, around or through it.” Edwards is the only certified oncology social worker in Mississippi.

The Mississippi Society for Social Work Leaders in Health Care invites supervisors and administration of its members to nominate an employee each year. The award winner must work in a health care setting, lead a health care social work program, demonstrate excellence in leadership and skill in the solutions of complex psycho-social situations, and relate in an effective, assertive manner to all who are active in the social health care system – administrators, physicians, nurses, professional and support staff and community agency personnel. The recipient must serve on organizational-wide committees such as performance improvement, length of stay initiatives, education, etc., and provide community service by serving on boards of directors of, or as a consultant to, social, health, education and other service-oriented groups.

Edwards started guided imagery classes at the Cancer Center and found a way to fund free massages for patients two times per week. In addition, she reorganized and energized “Barbershop Talk,” a program geared toward African-American males. She and another Cancer Center employee have expanded the program to seven counties by educating local barbers about prostate and colon cancer warning signs, screenings and treatment.

She is also assistant director of Camp Bluebird, a camp for adult cancer survivors that is held twice a year at Tombigbee State Park.

Edwards is involved in the Susan G. Komen North Mississippi Race for the Cure. She is on the Race committee and is responsible for the Survivor Luncheon, which kicks off the events for Race week. She also organizes the Survivor Tent and recognition on Race day. She organizes and conducts all support groups at the Cancer Center, including two that she developed herself.

“Cindy is committed to our patients,” Turner said. “She always makes sure she uses every available resource to help them. She searches the Internet for free items like box fans, clothing, coupons, etc., and distributes them to indigent patients. At Thanksgiving and Christmas, Cindy raises money to help her patients have happy holidays. We have had in excess of \$500 per family to spend at Christmas, and some very bountiful Thanksgiving dinners because of her coordination and hard work.”