## ATTENTION EMERGENCY ROOM PERSONNEL:

### WHEN CANCER PATIENTS COME TO THE ER ... BE AWARE OF THE DANGER SIGNS

### IMAGINE THIS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 pm</td>
<td>It's 8 p.m. and Ned checks in at the front desk of his local ER complaining of fever and flu-like symptoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 pm</td>
<td>Ned is examined by a triage nurse at 9:30 p.m. Ned doesn't mention he has cancer or that he just finished a round of chemo because he's certain he just has the flu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 am</td>
<td>It's midnight and Ned is seen by a physician. By this time, Ned's temperature has increased, and he is immediately admitted to the hospital for febrile neutropenia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 am</td>
<td>At 2:30 a.m. he is diagnosed with a serious infection that is potentially life-threatening, and will delay his next round of chemo, or worse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THIS HAPPENS ... A LOT!

- 60,000 cancer patients in the U.S. hospitalized.
- Among those, 1 in 14 will die from this complication.*

### WHY DON’T CANCER PATIENTS SPEAK UP?

Cancer patients may be too overwhelmed, embarrassed or simply unaware that their fever could be a sign of something so serious that it could put them at risk for infection, sepsis and even death.

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE

#### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- A fever may be the only sign of infection and should be treated as a medical emergency.
- Quick action can save a life.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- When you are checking-in patients, ask them if they are undergoing chemotherapy, or if they have had chemotherapy in the last 2 weeks.
  - If this question is not currently included in your ER check-in procedures, work with those in charge to include it.

#### WHAT THIS WILL MEAN

- This could be the difference between them staying on their treatment schedule or being hospitalized – or worse, dying.

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*Preventing Infections in Cancer Patients* is a comprehensive initiative led by CDC and the CDC Foundation to reduce infections in cancer patients. For more information on this topic and to learn more about this program, please visit [www.PreventCancerInfections.org](http://www.PreventCancerInfections.org).

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**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**