



# Cardiac Care

FOR NURSES  
NURSE PRACTITIONERS  
CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALISTS  
AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS



## Tapping Potential at the Chapter Level

By Brenda Garrett, R.N., M.S.N., C.N.P.

*Growing membership numbers was not the ACC's goal when it initiated the Cardiac Care Associate (CCA) membership category and started recruiting nurses and physician assistants specializing in cardiac care.*

*Instead, the new membership category demonstrated the College's acute awareness of the value added to cardiovascular medicine by the team of attending cardiovascular professionals.*



Brenda Garrett

No practice or institution provides medical care in a straight line from patient to doctor and doctor to patient. The team approach is not a novelty; it is the current status and the future of medicine. The ACC recognized that the non-M.D. cardiovascular professionals needed education and interaction that supported and reflected their everyday careers as they supported their physician colleagues and kept "beds rolling" in their institutions.

### Putting Enthusiasm to Good Use

I am frequently asked by new and established CCAs — How do I become involved with the ACC? This question echoes at each scientific session and ACC program or anytime CCAs gather. The CCA membership is by far the most energetic and dedicated group. They do not come to the table asking, "What are you going to do for me?" Instead, they want to know what they can do for the College.

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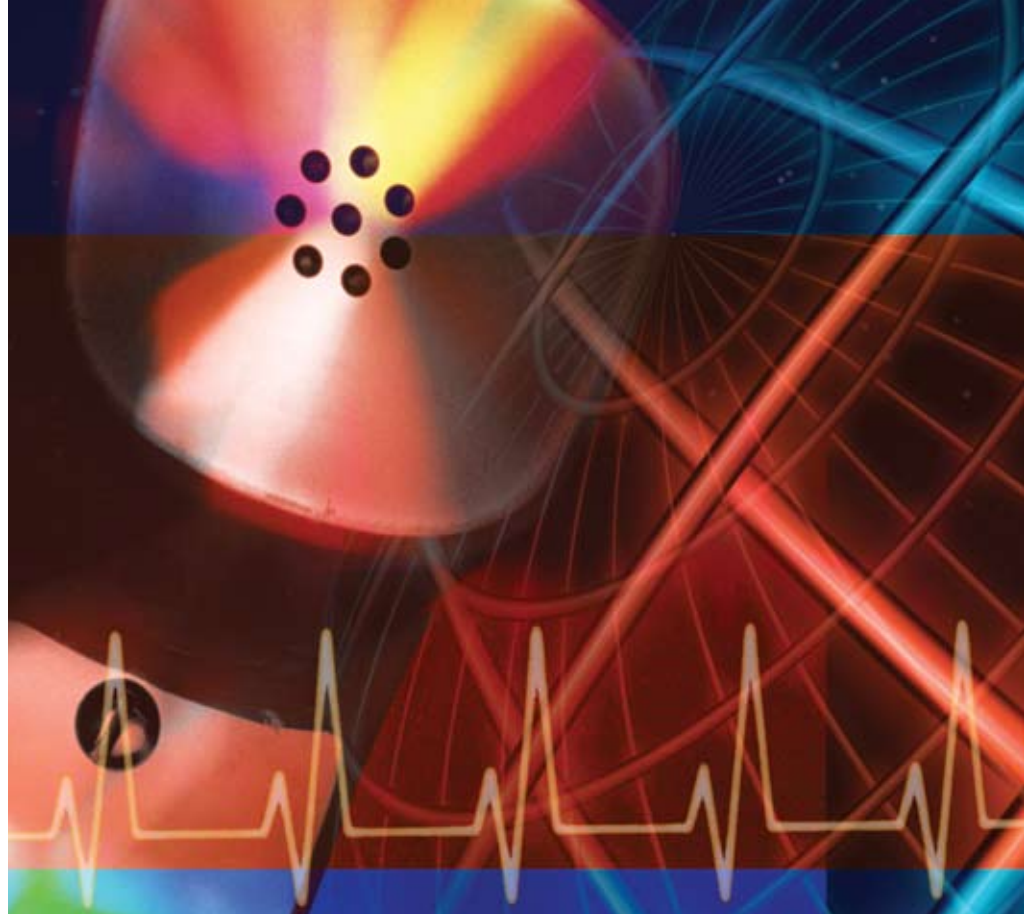
## CCA Membership Exceeds 2,500

The fast-growing ACC Cardiac Care Associate member category has reached a new milestone! To date, more than 2,500 registered nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and clinical nurse specialists have joined this pioneering group and are serving on vital decision-making committees, taking advantage of ACC continuing education opportunities, and attending networking receptions at major events.

In the past year, CCA's were:

- members of the Annual Scientific Session Planning Committee
- presenters at various ACC.06 sessions and ACC live programs
- editors or advisors for CardioSource, Cardiology, Cardiac Care and JACC
- members of the committee that has successfully enabled ACC to offer CNE for nurses.

Look for more exciting news as this vital segment of the ACC continues to grow.



## Are APN-Directed Telemanagement Programs Better?

A heart failure telemanagement program directed by an advanced practice nurse (A.P.N.) “decreases the costs and frequent hospitalizations associated with heart failure and improves the patient’s quality of life,” according to a review in the April 2006 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (JAANP)*.

The review compares A.P.N.-directed programs to programs directed by registered nurses (R.N.). The findings: the provider directing the telemanagement program does make a difference.

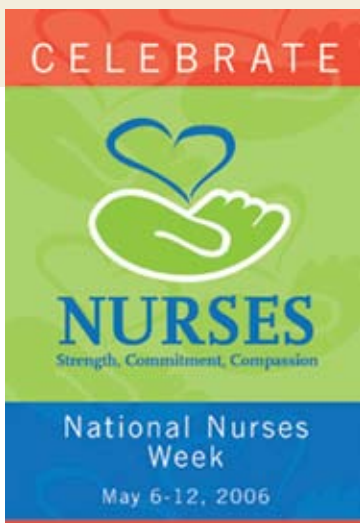
A.P.N.s are able to change medication and dosages and order outpatient testing, and they are better educated in the pathophysiology of heart failure than their R.N. colleagues.

According to the review, rehospitalization rates, outpatient costs and mortality all decreased for telemanagement programs directed by an A.P.N.

Heart failure continues to be a major public health problem in the United States, and frequent and expensive readmissions are overwhelming the health care system. The review concludes that A.P.N.-directed programs are one way to reduce costs and achieve “more favorable” patient outcomes.

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Patricia Delgado-Passler, M.S.Nc., R.N., and Ruth McCaffrey, N.D., A.R.N.P.-B.C., authors of the review, suggest further research to increase the knowledge surrounding comprehensive discharge programs and A.P.N.-directed telemanagement. The complete study can be found in the April 2006 issue of *JAANP*, Volume 18, Issue 4.



# Helping Health Care Providers Adopt Health IT

A recent report from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) acknowledges the positive impact of health information technology in improving quality of care for patients, but points to a gap in the information that health care providers need to implement these technologies successfully. AHRQ plans to help fill this gap with findings from more than 100 projects across the country.

The AHRQ report, “Costs and Benefits of Health Information Technology,” synthesizes studies that have examined the quality impact of health IT and the costs and organizational changes needed to implement health IT systems. The report reviews

data about the implementation of health IT to date, as documented in studies published through 2003. It does not project future health care benefits or savings.

The authors conclude that scientific reviews have shown significant improvements in the quality of health care using health IT systems. However, these successes have occurred primarily within large health care systems that created their own health IT systems and devoted substantial commitment and resources to their efforts.

AHRQ’s initiative is developing data needed about how to put health IT to work in more common health care settings such as



physicians’ offices and hospitals. The AHRQ-sponsored research will share the experiences of typical providers in implementing health IT systems.

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The report is available at <http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/hitsys-costs/hitsys.pdf>

## Nominate a CCA Colleague for the Spotlight

CCAs were in the spotlight when CCA member, Mae Centeno, won a Cherokee Inspired Comfort Award for 2005 (see April 2006 *Cardiac Care*). Let’s put another ACC member in the spotlight.

The award, established in 2003 by Cherokee Uniforms, a designer and manufacturer of health care apparel, recognizes exceptional service, sacrifice and innovation among health care professionals.

Award winners represent health care professionals who work in a variety of clinical specialties, medical settings and with unique patient populations. A panel of nurse leaders and Cherokee professionals chooses 12 winners who best meet the program’s key requirements.

Candidates may be nominated in two of the following categories but can only win in one: Registered Nurses, Advanced Practice Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, Student Nurses and other non-physician health care professionals.

If you would like to see another CCA member recognized, nominations for the 2006 awards are being accepted through May 31, 2006. To find out more, visit [www.CherokeeUniforms.com](http://www.CherokeeUniforms.com).

## Tapping Potential

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To date, the ACC is working to fully tap into the vast potential of this dynamic group by involving them with the College at chapter level. Many ACC Chapters have already tapped the CCA power by various means, including —

- Changing chapter bylaws to include CCAs. Approximately 75 percent of ACC Chapters have made bylaw changes
- Involving CCA and CCA liaisons on Chapter Councils
- Creating projects and programs for CCAs to implement, such as diabetes education initiatives (DEI)
- Developing CCA-specific programs or sessions at annual meetings

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**Brenda Garrett is clinical coordinator, Piedmont Hospital Center of Preventive Atherosclerosis Management, Marietta, GA.**

## To the Cardiac Care Team By Cynthia Adams, N.P.



Cindy Adams

In the last few years I have had the opportunity to serve as a member of the ACC/AHA Task Force for Writing Guidelines and as a member of the writing committee for the revision of the UA/NSTEMI Guidelines. Perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of my participation has been a full appreciation for the rigorous process that precedes publication of these guidelines. It has been exciting for me to lend my perspective as a nurse and allied health professional — a perspective that has been lacking in prior guidelines.

Participation in this work has been very beneficial to me as a clinician as well. Not only does it require that I stay current, as much as possible, with newly published research, but it has also enabled me to develop some skills in evaluating the merits of new research in terms of determining

what impact it should have on the current recommendations. Making a personal choice to change one's practice based on new research is very different from determining if and how the recommendations for all clinicians should change as a result.

I have very much enjoyed learning the complexities of the process. I have also had the good fortune to participate in the intellectual exchange among some of the most highly skilled and talented clinicians and academicians in the field. I thank the ACC and the AHA for inviting nursing to participate in this critical work, and I encourage my colleagues to consider volunteering their time for this and other activities. Our ACC membership experience is only as good as we ourselves make it.

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**Cynthia Adams is Nurse Practitioner Supervisor, Healthy Hearts Center, The Indiana Heart Hospital, Indianapolis.**

## Discover Cardiosource By Suzanne Hughes, M.S.N., R.N.



Suzanne Hughes

So much to read...so little time...For those who struggle to stay ahead of what your patients are hearing on National Public Radio and reading in the local and national newspapers, check out ACC's *Heart Health News*, available on Cardiosource, for daily updates in the areas of

- Industry
- Legislative/Regulatory
- Trends
- Research

Heart Health News is actually an e-publication that the ACC e-mails daily to all members. It highlights news articles across the nation on topics related to cardiovascular issues. After they are e-mailed, the issues of Heart Health News are then archived for five days on Cardiosource.

In a recent review, the content of Heart Health News included the following —

- **The ins and outs of Medicare Part D** — challenges for the elderly and for those who care for them

- **Latest on Generic simvastatin** — a court ruling governing the products that will be available after Zocor patent expires this summer.
- **State Health Programs** — find out what innovations are happening where to improve the health of our 50 states, from bike runs to smoking bans
- **Nursing Research around blood pressure measurement** — a study presented at the Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association's national meeting by nurses at the University of Virginia makes national news
- The growth in herbs and dietary supplements market leads to new guide by Consumer Reports
- Issues around physical education and nutrition in the schools — what is happening and what we can do about it

Heart Health News is just of the many publications provided by the ACC to help cardiovascular professionals address their patients questions, concerns, and needs.

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**Hughes is associate editor and the CCA representative for Cardiosource, ACC's online education tool.**