



## **Colitis and Crohn's Week - 18-26<sup>th</sup> June 2005**

### **“Fame Academy’s Carrie Grant supports NACC’s call for more Colitis and Crohn’s Nurses”**

**9<sup>th</sup> June 2005, St Alban’s, Herts.** The leading Colitis and Crohn’s Disease patients’ charity NACC is launching a new campaign with the support of Fame Academy’s Carrie Grant to highlight the importance of specialist nurses to the care of people living with these conditions and to call for action to address the serious shortage of specialist Colitis and Crohn’s nursing posts around the UK. With only 26% of Colitis and Crohn’s patients in a NACC survey reporting that they have the support of a specialist nurse, most people living with these potentially life-threatening and often “life-stopping” diseases do not have access to this vitally important element of good gastroenterology care.

Carrie Grant who lives with the challenges of Crohn’s Disease is calling for all Colitis and Crohn’s patients, their families, friends and healthcare professionals to support the **NACC Calls for More Colitis and Crohn’s Nurses** Campaign Petition by adding their names either on-line at [www.nacc.org.uk](http://www.nacc.org.uk) or by phone on 0871 734 3000 from 18<sup>th</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2005. The charity is aiming for an ambitious one million “calls” to support NACC’s “call” for more nurses and plans to address the serious situation with NHS management bodies and the highest levels of Government.

The small number of specialist Colitis and Crohn’s nurses (currently less than 150 in the UK) play major roles in improving the quality of care and management provided to their patients. Typically, the help-lines they offer are the “life-lines” that patients reach for first during a flare-up of their illness. This is because symptoms include acute, painful diarrhoea (in some cases patients need the toilet 20-30 times a day) with consequent levels of extreme tiredness - all of which make travelling and hospital visits virtually impossible. The specialist nurse can offer immediate, highly qualified advice and ensure that where necessary patients are either prioritised for an out-patient appointment or admitted to hospital.

A specialist nurse can sometimes avoid the need for patients to be admitted to hospital and reduce unnecessary outpatient appointments, saving both patients’ time and NHS costs. One recent study carried out by Allison Nightingale, Nurse Specialist at Addenbrooke’s Hospital Cambridge

has shown that where specialist nurses were involved in the management of patients, the numbers of out-patient appointments were reduced by a significant 38% and patient bed days by a marked 21%.

Carrie Grant explains, “I have been lucky enough to have been cared for by a specialist nurse who has made a big difference to the management of my condition by providing excellent accessibility, continuity of care and advising me on avoidance of illness and how to maintain good health. My nurse has time to explain my condition and discuss the management of my treatment in more depth.

Carrie continues, “Colitis and Crohn’s Disease are life-long debilitating conditions, which can have a significant negative impact on the lives of sufferers during a disease “flare-up”. The specialist nurse is a critically important “life-line” and everyone with Colitis and Crohn’s disease should be able to access their skills and support.”

Speaking at the launch of the new campaign, Richard Driscoll, Director of NACC explains, “Given that there are so few Colitis and Crohn’s specialist nurses and that the telephone is a key part of the service they often provide, we are launching this NACC initiative to highlight the issues as a telephone-based campaign entitled “NACC Calls for More Colitis and Crohn’s Nurses”.

Colitis and Crohn’s are much more common than people generally think, affecting 1 in 400 people, similar to Parkinson’s disease (1:500) and more common than multiple sclerosis (1:700). However, there is a serious lack of recognition of Colitis and Crohn’s Disease at both Government level and in the NHS which is reflected in the lack of provision of specialist Colitis and Crohn’s nurses. It is for this reason that the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Gastroenterology and Stoma Care Forum is strongly supporting the NACC Campaign.”

Elaine Steven, Chair of the NACC Trustees, comments, “The NACC Campaign will run over the next two years so that we can ensure that we see genuine increases in numbers of nurses. This year we are sending information direct to NHS Hospital Trusts and Primary Care Trusts to raise awareness among the local decision makers of the need for Colitis and Crohn’s Nurses. We are also asking gastroenterologists to show their support for the campaign by displaying the NACC campaign posters and fliers in their waiting rooms.

NACC members will be writing to their MPs and articles are planned in the healthcare and consumer press, in addition to a consumer radio campaign – all aiming to get one million people to add their name to NACC’s petition. This can be done either via NACC’s website at

[www.nacc.org.uk](http://www.nacc.org.uk) or on the phone by calling 0871 734 3000. We are aiming to achieve an ambitious one million “calls” to support our “call” for more nurses.”

Elaine continues, “Following NACC’s campaign, we hope that we will raise the overall awareness and sense of priority at Government and local level and be able to improve the current situation by substantially increasing the number of Colitis and Crohn’s nurses within 2-3 years. Once the petition has been completed, NACC will be seeking interviews with the UK Ministers for Health to gain their support for greater priority to be given to funding for these posts.”

**Health professionals, patients or their families seeking further information or support can contact:**

**National Association for Colitis and Crohn’s Disease (NACC)  
4 Beaumont House, Sutton Road, St Albans, Herts. AL1 5HH**

**Information Line 0845 130 2233 (daytime)      NACC-in-Contact Line 0845 130 3344 (evening)**

**Website [www.nacc.org.uk](http://www.nacc.org.uk)**

**ENDS**

#### **Editor’s Notes**

**NACC** provides a valuable support network and information resource for people and families affected by Colitis and Crohn’s Disease as well as raising significant funds for research. The 70 NACC Groups across the UK enable members to share information and experiences. The Daytime Information Line is available to members and non-members alike who have queries about all aspects of their disease. The NACC-in-Contact Line offers members a chance to speak to a trained volunteer with Colitis or Crohn’s Disease. Membership of NACC is open to anyone who has Colitis or Crohn’s Disease, their friends and families, health professionals and anyone who wishes to support the charity. Membership costs £12 in the first year, £10 thereafter.

### **NACC – Improving life for people affected by Colitis and Crohn’s Disease**

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For more press information on NACC Colitis and Crohn’s Week 2005 please contact:  
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