

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Andrea Butler  
804-628-2111; albutler@vcu.edu

## **VCU MASSEY CANCER CENTER LAUNCHES THE VIRGINIA CANCER PAIN INITIATIVE TO ALLEVIATE PAIN FROM CANCER**

*Toll-free number and Web site offer free pain advice for patients throughout Virginia*

Richmond, Va. (Oct. 11, 2005) People suffering from cancer-related pain in Virginia now have access to a free service that provides expert clinical advice on pain management from experts and volunteers at the VCU Massey Cancer Center.

Massey has established a new office of the Virginia Cancer Pain Initiative (VCPI), a free service for patients, families and health care professionals throughout the Commonwealth who need help with pain management.

Under this program, people may call a toll-free number, 1-866-990-HURT, for immediate answers from highly trained pain specialists. In addition, the VCPI offers a Web site at [www.vcpi.org](http://www.vcpi.org), and the service offers customized medical literature searches on any pain-related issue.

"Thousands of Virginians suffer from acute or chronic pain each day," said Patrick Coyne, MSN, APRN, FAAN, clinical director of Thomas Palliative Care Program at the VCU Massey Cancer Center. "Our goal is to relieve suffering and help people live with a higher level of function or, in the case of terminal illness, pass away in comfort and peace."

The hotline was made possible by a grant from the American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives (AACPI). According to the AACPI, the under-treatment of cancer pain is a major public health problem in the United States. Studies suggest that 50 to 75 percent of people with cancer experience moderate to severe pain, despite the fact that nearly all cancer pain can be controlled.

Ashby Watson, RN, MS, CS, OCN, oncology clinical nurse specialist at Massey, will work with Coyne, a national pain expert, and the staff and volunteers at Massey's patient Resource Libraries to support the program. Watson recently received the Distinguished Service Award from the AACPI, the organization's highest honor, for her accomplishments as president of the Virginia Cancer Pain Initiative. The Virginia Cancer Pain Initiative and the network of State Cancer Pain Initiatives throughout the country strive to remove the barriers that prevent the effective control of pain and improve the quality of life for people with cancer.

### **About the VCU Massey Cancer Center**

The VCU Massey Cancer Center, one of 60 National Cancer Institute-designated research institutions, is VCU's focal point for basic and clinical cancer research, education, prevention and cancer health care. Since 1975, Massey has served as an internationally recognized center of excellence. Its 175 doctors and researchers are dedicated to improving the quality of human life by developing effective means to prevent, control and ultimately to cure cancer. Visit Massey online at [www.vcu.edu/mcc/](http://www.vcu.edu/mcc/).