

# Health Awareness

## Understanding Multiple Myeloma

(NAPSA)—You may be surprised to learn that multiple myeloma is the second most common cancer of the blood, after leukemia. It starts in plasma cells, a type of white blood cell. In time, myeloma cells collect in the bone marrow and may damage the solid part of the bone and eventually harm other tissues and organs, such as the skeleton and the kidneys.

In fact, there are approximately 114,000 new cases diagnosed every year. If you or a loved one is among the 230,000 people living with multiple myeloma worldwide there are a few facts you should know.

### What Can Be Done

For many people with the disease, an autologous stem cell transplant may be an answer for eligible patients. This involves collecting the patient's own blood-forming stem cells and storing them. He or she is then treated with high doses of chemotherapy or a combination of chemotherapy and radiation. This kills cancer cells but also eliminates the remaining blood-producing stem cells in the bone marrow. Afterward, the collected stem cells are transplanted back into the patient, so the bone marrow can produce new blood cells.

To help people learn more about the disease and its treatments, the Multiple Myeloma Journey Partners Program was created.

This peer-to-peer education program for patients, caregivers and health care providers leverages storytelling as a tool to improve the patient experience. Journey Partners are multiple myeloma patients who have experienced similar emotions, faced the same challenges and asked the same questions about living with the disease. A Multiple Myeloma Journey Partner will come to any community in which 10 or more people would like to attend the free one-hour



**People with multiple myeloma can learn about their condition from other patients trained to explain it.**

educational seminar. The main benefit is that multiple myeloma patients know they're not alone, and the program provides educational resources and services that help patients and families navigate their journey to achieve the best possible outcomes.

As John Killip, a Multiple Myeloma Journey Partner, puts it, "It was conversations with my support group, family and health care providers that influenced my decision to have a stem cell transplant in 2008, when I was first diagnosed with multiple myeloma, at the age of 65. Mentoring other multiple myeloma patients is one of the highlights of my life. I became a Journey Partner to share my story and help others with the disease make sense of the diagnosis and overcome the fear of the unknown."

### Learn More

For more information or to request a program, you can visit [www.mmjourneypartners.com](http://www.mmjourneypartners.com). Anyone interested in becoming a Multiple Myeloma Journey Partner can contact the program coordinator listed on the website. The program is sponsored by Sanofi Genzyme, the specialty care global business unit of Sanofi focused on rare diseases, multiple sclerosis, immunology, and oncology.