

Calistro Mother Seeks Alternate Treatment

By LINDA BOUVIER
Citizen Staff Reporter

Patti Calistro and her four-year-old daughter Amber have flown to Grand Bahama Island. They're not on vacation. They have decided to seek alternative cancer treatment, not available in this country, for Amber.

Ms. Calistro is disillusioned with conventional medical treatment.

Several months ago the lump behind Amber's ear was misdiagnosed by several doctors as a calcium deposit. Finally, a surgeon diagnosed the lump as a malignant tumor; further tests confirmed that the disease had spread.

The negative side effects of chemotherapy frighten Ms. Calistro. She is chagrined that choice of treatment is not legally possible in this country.

She has chosen to fight the disease at the Immunology Researching Centre in the Bahamas under the care of Dr. Lawrence Burton. The doctor has studied the immune mechanism and cancer since his post-graduate days at New York University.

This experimental therapy augments the cancer-fighting capabilities of the immune mechanism. Research

has shown that the immune mechanism can and does fight cancer, according to Ms. Calistro.

When Ms. Calistro was trying to decide what would be best for Amber, she contacted Gerald and Diana Green, the Massachusetts couple whose son Chad had been treated with laetrile for his leukemia. Chad died in his mother's arms on October 12 last year, in Tijuana.

"Jerry and Diana sent me a note on April 11," Ms. Calistro said. "Along with the note I received lists of non-toxic therapies and a diagnostic tests directory."

A new book "Choices: Realistic Alternatives in Cancer Treatment," by Morra and Potts confirmed Ms. Calistro's decision to seek alternative cancer treatment.

She read the listed common and occasional side effects of the chemotherapy drugs that her daughter was to have received here—nausea, diarrhea, possible organ damage, hair loss, mouth sores, bone marrow depression.

"The side effects from the immunotherapy drugs are less severe," said Ms. Calistro. They include tired feeling, inflammation, flu-like feeling, and possible nausea and vomiting.

This kind of treatment, which Ms. Calistro feels is more natural and less destructive to her daughter, is not offered in this country. That is why they have chosen to leave the United States.

Living in the Bahamas has been made possible by "a lady who knows Dr. Burton. She donated \$3,000 for our living expenses while we're there. We couldn't have done it without her," Ms. Calistro said.

As a means to raise funds for research and a trip to Disneyworld, friends have distributed coin boxes throughout the city. Recently, \$202 had been collected from 29 places of business.

The Amber Calistro Fund has been established at Colonial Bank, Baybrook Office, in West Haven. The purpose of the fund is to help raise money for cancer treatment research.

Other fund raisers have been planned to help the Calistro family. Annie Iacozza and Jan Donaldson, students at Jonathan Law High School, hope to sell raffle tickets to raise money for Amber.

Commenting on her decision to seek alternate cancer treatment, Ms. Calistro said, "I feel sorry for the people who are left behind. I wish freedom of choice in cancer treatment were available to everybody."