

San Francisco General Hospital's Adult Medical Clinic, where Ms. Trupin is a nurse, usually sees upwards of 800 patients a week. And because San Francisco General is a teaching hospital, where interns and residents come and go, nurses like Trupin provide patients with the only real continuity they may get in health care services.

"The nurses are there throughout the week, year after year," says Trupin. "For us, it's a great opportunity to get to know our patients and it has enabled me to develop longstanding relationships with many of them."

Because the clinic serves a largely poor, urban population, Trupin has been able to develop close relationships with a large number of minority women who suffer from a number of common chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes and asthma. Ten years ago, Trupin noticed an alarming trend within this patient population.

"We were seeing women who had previously been quite well-controlled in terms of their medical problems," she recalls. "But they were starting to suffer what seemed like an abrupt decline, and not only were their medical problems seeming to increase, their moods changed in a dramatic way."

Because of her rapport with these patients, Trupin was able to determine that they were victims of the crack cocaine epidemic then sweeping the city. Their adult children, having become addicted to the drug, were in many cases neglecting and abandoning their children. Trupin's patients — women who had believed their child-rearing days were behind them — were faced suddenly with the choice of either relinquishing care of their grandchildren to the foster care system or assuming responsibility themselves. It really wasn't much of a choice. Forced to take over the care of their grandchildren, as well as cope with their own children's problems, these women were sinking into a debilitating state of despair.

Recognizing the threat that depression posed to her patients' health, Trupin took action. Working with Dr. Doriane Miller, she co-founded *Grandparents Who Care*. This support

group and advocacy program, which now has eight chapters and many extended services in the San Francisco area, gave the women a forum in which they could express their anger and fears and, in doing so, battle the depression that was threatening their own health.

In nominating Trupin for her award, Dr. Miller noted, "Recognizing depression in a primary care setting requires asking the question behind the question. Sue Trupin took the time to ask that question."