



certification/news

The Newsletter of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation
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Past President's Message

New Ventures, Volunteers Contribute to ONCC Success

Vicki Norton, RN, BSN, OCN®

My two years as President of ONCC has ended. It has been a pleasure to work with the staff of ONCC, the Board of Directors, and the many volunteers who give of their time, energy, and knowledge to make oncology certification the best it can be. This past year has been one of milestones and firsts. ONCC

- Received 9,595 applications for initial testing and renewals. This is the highest number of certification applications ever in a single year.
- Saw the total number of certified nurses grow from 27,243 to 29,913. We are hoping to hit 30,000 certified nurses by 2011, which will be ONCC's 25th anniversary.
- Unveiled the Certified Breast Care Nurse (CBCN®) examination. More than 403 nurses currently hold the CBCN® credential, which is now a federally

registered certification mark.

- Began collaboration with ONS to create a radiation therapy assessment-based certificate program (see page 6 for more information).

Because volunteers are so important to the mission of ONCC, we conducted a survey of 240 nurses who have volunteered for ONCC in the past three years to determine their satisfaction with the experience. Some results include the following.

- 98% of the volunteers rated their experience as excellent (85%) or good (14%).
- 96% are likely to volunteer for ONCC again.
- 92% gained personal satisfaction from their contributions.
- 92% met new people with whom to network.
- 78% had fun.
- 68% learned new skills.

("Past President's Message" continued on page 6.)

Nominees Wanted for 2010 Board Election

Take your leadership skills to the next level by submitting your nomination for the ONCC Board of Directors. One position on the ONCC Board of Directors will be open for election in November 2010. This position is for a three-year term that begins June 1, 2011, and is open to nurses who hold any ONCC certification.

Nomination packets are available on the ONCC Web site. Completed nominations must be received by July 23, 2010. The ONCC Nominating Committee will prepare a slate of candidates in late summer. Voting will begin in early November 2010. All voting will be conducted online and must be completed by early December.





Chapter Grants: Breakfast or Broadway? Where will your ONCC Chapter Grant take you in 2010?

Susan Wozniak, BSN, RN, OCN®

In 2009, ONCC® awarded five grants to chapters of ONS to help fund activities that encourage, support, or recognize oncology certification of nurses. A previous issue of *Certification News* described two of these projects, a Certification Eye-Opener Breakfast hosted by the Metro Detroit Chapter and a Community Garden to recognize certified nurses created by the Missouri Valley Chapter. Two more projects are described as follows.

The Richmond Area Chapter used a chapter grant to fund a certification recognition breakfast during which they held a formal AOCNS®/AOCNP®/OCN® pinning ceremony. The event was attended by chapter members, area nursing leaders, and hospital administrators. In 2009, the Greater Baltimore Chapter of ONS continued a long-standing tradition of taking an annual bus trip to New York City where

chapter members and their guests create their own Big Apple adventure. As a way to recognize their certified members, and encourage nurses to become certified, the chapter offers this trip free-of-charge to the first 50 certified oncology nurses who sign up. They had 36 participate in the program this past year.

Recognition, support, and encouragement of certification in oncology nursing can take place at breakfast, in a boardroom, in a garden, or on a bus. Your certification celebration can be as innovative as your chapter and as diversified as your members. The one thing that the Richmond Area Chapter, the Greater Baltimore Chapter, the Miami Dade Chapter, the Metro Detroit Chapter, and the Missouri Valley ND Chapter have in common is that in 2009, ONCC Chapter Grant funding made their celebrations possible.

Employers Staffing Facilities With Oncology Certified Nurses

ONCC recently awarded 34 recognition plaques to institutions for staffing their facilities with oncology certified nurses. These plaques are available free-of-charge to any patient care setting in which the majority of professional nurses (more than 50%) are ONCC-certified. To request your plaque, go to <http://www.oncc.org/awards/plaques.shtml>.

- Carolinas Medical Center, Blumenthal Cancer Center Outpatient Infusion in Charlotte, NC
- Christus Schumpert St. Mary Place, Cancer Treatment Center in Shreveport, LA
- Dallas Oncology Consultants in Mansfield, TX
- Dallas Oncology Consultants, Cancer Institute of Dallas-Radiation Oncology Center in Duncanville, TX
- EMH Regional Medical Center, Outpatient Infusion Services in Elyria, OH
- Fauquier Hospital, Infusion Center in Warrenton, VA
- Florida Cancer Specialists, Venice Healthpark, in Venice, FL
- Florida Institute of Research, Medicine & Surgery in Clermont
- George Zervos, MD in Glen Head, NY
- Group Health, Oncology Infusion Clinic in Bellevue, WA
- HOA Cancer Center in Lambertville, MI
- Medical Oncology Associates in Augusta, GA
- Medical Oncology Associates of Long Island in Woodbury, NY

- Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Basking Ridge Regional Site in New Jersey
- Michigan State University, Breslin Cancer Center in Lansing
- North Shore/Long Island Jewish Health System, Center for Advanced Medicine, Monter Cancer Center in Lake Success, NY
- Ohio State University Hospital East, James Care East in Columbus
- Overlook Hospital, 3 A/B Oncology in Summit, NJ
- Queen's Medical Center, Queen's Cancer Center in Honolulu, HI
- Samaritan Hospital Cancer Treatment Center, Medical Oncology in Troy, NY
- Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, Oncology in Florida
- Southwest Regional Medical Center, Hematology and Oncology in Waynesburg, PA
- St. John's Hospital of Healtheast, Cancer Care Clinic/Infusion Outpatient in Maplewood, MN
- Star Hematology & Medical Oncology Associates in Phillipsburg, NJ
- Tennessee Oncology, Hematologic Malignancy Unit in Nashville
- The James Cancer Hospital, Clinical Treatment Unit in Columbus, OH

("Employers Staffing" continued on page 3.)



Dual Certification Demonstrates Excellence at California Oncology of the Central Valley

Ashley Leak, RN, MSN, OCN®

For two nurses at California Oncology of the Central Valley in Fresno, certification isn't about recognition or money or a plaque on the wall, it's about doing all they can do for their patients. Susan Dunn, RN, BSN, OCN®, CBCN®, and Carolyn Gaston, RN, OCN®, CBCN®, are the only two full-time nurses at the clinic, and they work along a team of interdisciplinary health professionals, under the direction of Christopher Perkins, MD, and Lany Sivongsay, Adult Nurse Practitioner. They know they are privileged in that they also have a full time pharmacist, Jeffrey Shinoda, PharmD, on site as well as a recently hired per diem nurse, Katie Fynaut, RN.

"Cancer is terrifying for every patient," Susan says. "Upon entering the front door they are greeted with a warm smile or a hug, and this atmosphere continues throughout the entire office. We're family. People tell us we are different." On average, California Oncology, which has been open nine years, sees about 30 patients a day in the 12-chair infusion room. Susan and Carolyn, who have worked together for eight years, have 25 and 21 years in oncology experience, respectively. They are on the front lines of carrying out the practice's philosophy—restoration of body, mind, and spirit. As part of this, they seek ways to bring cheer to the infusion room; holiday decorating, laughter, drawing the patient into the group rather than staying isolated during treatment. The patients have even organized potlucks on their treatment days. The center hosts themed days for patients

and staff alike. For example, on Wednesdays, the staff and patients attempt to out-accessorize each other with long, dangly earrings! This event has been going on for five years now and was recently featured in the local newspaper.

Both nurses are dually certified as an Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN®) and a Certified Breast Care Nurse (CBCN®).



Susan Dunn, RN, BSN, OCN®, CBCN®, and Carolyn Gaston, RN, OCN®, CBCN®

Last year, the first time it was offered, they took the first CBCN® subspecialty certification examination offered and passed. "Our office specializes in the treatment of breast cancer, so we felt like we had a good knowledge base prior to studying for the examination," Carolyn says. "Certification validated what we already knew, but the process also motivated us to continue to learn everything we can to give our patients the best

possible care because they deserve it!"

California Oncology covered examination fees, and although the nurses didn't receive any additional pay or bonuses, they had their CBCN® certificates framed, were featured in the local newspaper and a television news report, and the facility honored them with a breakfast and gift certificates for dinner. They plan to keep both certifications, OCN® and CBCN®, as ONC-PRO allows points to overlap in content required for renewal of both credentials. In the past, Carolyn and Susan have attended ONS Congress and look forward to future professional activities. The California Oncology of the Central Valley demonstrates ongoing excellence through dual certification!

Employers Staffing *(continued from page 2)*

The Miriam Hospital, 4B, in Providence, RI
Thompson Cancer Survival Center, Clinical Trials in Knoxville, TN
UPMC Cancer Center, Jefferson, in Clairton, PA
UT Southwestern Medical Center, Bone Marrow Transplant in Dallas, TX
University Medical Center at Princeton, B2 Oncology Unit in

New Jersey
Washington University School of Medicine, Siteman Cancer Center Treatment Area in St. Louis, MO
Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, Pediatric Oncology Treatment Center in Connecticut
Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, 7-West Pediatric Oncology in Connecticut



Creating a Certification Examination Is a Complex Process

Susan D. Bruce, RN, MSN, OCN®

What goes into creating a specialty certification examination? There is a lot of behind-the-scenes work that occurs. Discussion of a specialty certification may begin when a potential area of need is identified by the ONCC Board or when interest is expressed to the Board by a group of nurses. Extensive information is gathered by ONCC staff, as to the number of people that could potentially seek and maintain a certification in the area. If preliminary data warrants further exploration, ONCC may conduct a role delineation study to determine an outline of knowledge areas for the specialty and identify any overlap with knowledge areas addressed by existing examinations. The role delineation looks at job responsibilities and knowledge necessary for competent performance.

Considerations also exist regarding the costs associated with developing a specialty examination. The costs of initiating and sustaining a certification examination over time are quite expensive when you consider the convening of various groups to perform item writing, determine passing score, and conduct the statistical analysis. Role delineation studies are performed every five years, producing an updated test blueprint. Item writing workshops are conducted periodically to make sure that enough items exist in the item bank. New areas add to the blueprint, such as palliative care, and require the creation of additional items. Costs and fees also are paid to the testing company that assists in the development, analysis, scoring, and administration of the examination. If the number of potential candi-

dates is low, it will be difficult to sustain a sound and reliable program over time. It is important that an adequate number of candidates take the certification examination annually to gather the statistical data on each item, as well as the entire examination, to determine that a valid and reliable measure of knowledge has been achieved. A sufficient number of candidates is required to cover the costs of sound development and secure administration of the examination.

We are entering an era where it may not be economically feasible to provide all interested groups with a specialty certification examination. ONCC will take each request under consideration on a case-by-case basis. The challenge continues to be exploring new ways to recognize and validate sub-specialty oncology nursing practice.

CBCN®, CPHON® Credentials Granted Registered Mark Status

ONCC has obtained federal registration for the certification mark CBCN®, awarded to nurses who pass the Certified Breast Care Nurse Examination, and for the certification mark CPHON®, awarded to nurses who pass the Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse Examination.

The purpose of a certification mark

is to ensure purchasers that goods or services meet standards or qualifications that an association or other entity has predetermined. In the case of nursing certification, a certification mark informs the healthcare consumers that nurses possess the knowledge to practice competently in the area of practice as measured by the certification test.

Registration of a certification mark is awarded by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Registration provides ONCC with protections against infringement on the certification mark. Please be sure always to use the ® symbol in connection with the mark to alert the public that the mark is registered and may not be used without permission from ONCC.

2010 Renewal Applications Due September 15

Nurses who are planning to renew their certification in 2010 by Option 1 (Practice hours + Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option, or ONC-PRO) should submit their complete application and

ONC-PRO Logs by September 15, 2010. Candidates who submit complete applications by September 15 will qualify for a discounted application fee (a savings of \$100). All applications and logs must be received by

October 15, 2010 (with the full, non-discounted fee).

More information about renewal by Option 1 can be found on the ONCC Web site at www.oncc.org. Click on "Renew Your Certification."

Certified Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurse: What Adding the “H” Means to Me

Kathy Trimble, RN, BSN, CPON®, CPN

In October 1995, I took the Certified Pediatric Oncology Nurse (CPON®) examination for the first time. It was with great pride that I successfully passed and was granted the CPON® credential. The CPON® credential validates that I have the knowledge and experience to provide competent pediatric oncology care. My CPON® certification has enhanced my professional development as it allowed me to become an APHON Chemotherapy/Biotherapy Instructor.

In my current position at Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield, IL, I coordinate care for both oncology and hema-

tology patient populations. I am very excited to take the Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse (CPHON®) test. This will validate my competency in caring for pediatric patients with hematological diseases throughout the health and illness continuum and benefit my patients and their families with the assurance of having a certified pediatric hematology nurse caring for them. This certification also will benefit my employer and enhance my role as a mentor, validating my expertise. CPHON® certification is a way to show my commitment to providing quality care to both patients with hematological diseases and cancer.

Practice Round

Sharpen Your Test-Taking Skills

ONCC offers free practice tests for each of its certification tests. Practice tests are intended to provide candidates with examples of how ONCC test items are formatted. The following items were taken from the free OCN® Practice Test, revised in November 2009, and available at www.oncc.org. Practice tests may be very helpful to test candidates, however, they are not intended to serve as study materials. The use of practice tests does not guarantee a passing score on any ONCC examination. Free practice tests, and additional practice tests available for purchase, can be found at www.oncc.org.

1. An oncology nurse teaching a cancer biology class explains that a proto-oncogene's role is to:
 - A. Stimulate angiogenesis.
 - B. Cause apoptosis.
 - C. Inhibit tumor growth.
 - D. Promote cell division.
2. A survivor of colon cancer expresses his desire to change jobs. He is concerned that he will be unable to obtain health insurance at a new job because of his history of cancer. The nurse's best intervention is to:
 - A. Encourage him to speak with his attorney.
 - B. Refer him to a support group.
 - C. Inform him about the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
 - D. Provide him with the phone number of the National Coalition of Cancer Survivorship.

Answers:

1. D. Rationale: Proto-oncogenes promote the specialization and division of normal cells. A change in a proto-oncogene's genetic sequence can result in uncontrolled cell growth, ultimately causing the formation of a cancerous tumor. Proto-oncogenes can be transformed into oncogenes in three ways: point mutation (alteration of a single nucleotide base pair), translocation (a segment of the chromosome breaks off and attaches to another chromosome), or amplification (increase in the number of copies of the proto-oncogene).

Reference: Yarbro, C.H., Goodman, M., & Frogge, M.H. (Eds.). (2005). *Cancer nursing: Principles and practice* (6th ed.). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, p. 11.

2. C. Rationale: Some survivors may avoid changing jobs because they fear the loss of health insurance. Survivors and their family members are protected at the workplace by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Cancer is considered a disability under the ADA. The act requires employers to treat all employees the same, including the provision of benefits. If insurance coverage is offered to all employees, it must be offered to the cancer survivor or the employer is in violation of the ADA.

Reference: Carroll-Johnson, R.M, Gorman, L.M., & Bush, N.J. (Eds.) (2006). *Psychosocial nursing care along the cancer continuum* (2nd ed.). Pittsburgh, PA: Oncology Nursing Society, p. 36.



Board Moves Forward With Radiation Certificate Program

Susan D. Bruce, RN, MSN, OCN®

The ONCC Board of Directors met March 18–21 for their spring meeting. High on the agenda was a decision whether to proceed with a certificate program for radiation oncology nurses. After a thoughtful review of the outcomes of the focus group research conducted at Institutes of Learning last fall and the results of a recent survey of radiation oncology nurses, ONCC will move forward with a radiation oncology certificate program. The difference between the certificate program and a certification examination is that credentials will not accompany successful completion of the certificate program. The certificate program will include a comprehensive educational course, followed by a post-course assessment. Those who complete the

course requirements and pass the assessment will receive a certificate. The educational component of the program will be developed by ONS. The target date for launching the program is 2011.

The Board elected new officers for the upcoming 2010–2011 year. Josephine Visser, RN, BSN, OCN®, will be the new ONCC President; Carol Breuggen, MS, APRN, BC, AOCNS®, will serve as Vice-President; and Lauri Linder, PhD, APRN, CPON®, will assume the role of Secretary/Treasurer. They will take office on June 1. A big thank-you to Vicki Norton, RN, BSN, OCN®, AOCN®, who has served as President for the past two years. Her leadership has been a tremendous asset to the ONCC Board.

Michael Smart Elected to ONCC Board

ONCC-certified nurses elected Michael Smart, RN, BSN, OCN®, to the ONCC Board of Directors in the 2009 election that ended in December. Smart is an oncology nurse at Huntsville Hospital in Alabama. He began a three-year term on the Board on June 1, 2010.

Smart has been certified as an OCN® since 2004. His leadership experience includes



service on the ONCC *Certification News* Editorial Board, as an OCN® Item Writer, as a member of the *Oncology Nursing Forum (ONF)* Review Board, and *ONF* Editorial Board. He is also a member of the Oncology Nurses of North Alabama Chapter of ONS.

Seven percent of ONCC-certified nurses cast votes in the 2009 election. The next election will be held in November 2010.

Get Certified for Free in 2011!

Are you planning to take a certification test or renew your credential in 2011? If yes, make a note to apply for an ONCC Roberta Scofield Memorial Certification Award by August 1, 2010.

ONCC will award up to 100 Scofield Awards. Each award consists of a free registration for a 2011 certification test or renewal by Option 1 (Practice hours + Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option, or ONC-PRO). The awards only may be used for a 2011 certification test or renewal

registration.

Applicants must be members of either ONS or the Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses but do not need to be currently certified. Nurses who currently are certified should only apply if they are due to renew in 2011, or are planning to obtain an additional credential in 2011.

Visit the ONCC Web site at www.oncc.awards/Scofield for information on how to apply.

Past President's Message *(continued from page 1)*

ONCC is evaluating methods to improve the rigor of certification renewal requirements in response to the healthcare focus on patient safety initiatives, greater transparency in evaluating competence, and consumer demand for development of methods to determine ongoing qualification of health professionals. This continuing competence debate and focus will be strategically evalu-

ated in the coming years. The American Board of Nursing Specialties is planning research on this topic, which ONCC supports.

As you can see, these are exciting times in ONCC. It is a wonderful organization with which to volunteer. Next time you see or receive a call for ONCC volunteers, put your hat in the ring. You won't regret it—and you'll have fun too!



Advocates Sign-On to Encourage Certification

Twenty two nurses recently joined the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program (ONCAP). Advocates are certified nurses who voluntarily promote the benefits of certification in their workplace, chapter, or community. Join the Advocates Program at <http://www.oncc.org/support/advocatesProgram.shtml>.

Steven Bailey, Toledo, OH
Ashley Bell, St Louis, MO
Leslee Carneal, Amazonia, MO

Jeannie Lee Cheeks, Greenville, SC
Jacqueline Clarke, Greensboro, NC
Elisabeth Dolan, Cleveland, OH
Paula Eubanks, Pittsburgh, PA
Robin Green, Riverside, CA
Kimberly Hill, Knoxville, TN
Sherry Johnson, Memphis, TN
Lee Ann Judy, Hartford, CT
Kathleen Kearney, Greensboro, NC
Debra Kelly, Houston, TX
Dawn Kopaczewski, Milwaukee, WI
Debra Magnanelli, Georgetown, SC
Curlisa Mapp, Atlanta, GA

Christine McIntyre, Frostburg, MD
Diane Mesiroff, Salinas, CA
Laura Murphy-Eagles, Quincy, MA
Susan Piligian, Hollywood, FL
Patricia Reymann, Birmingham, AL
Debbie Rimmel, Hinsdale, IL
Edith Rochon, Falls Church, VA
Barbara Rodgers, Bremerton, WA
Nonniekaye Shelbourne, Bethesda, MD
Mary Sweigart, Yuma, AZ
Michele Tull, Oklahoma City, OK
Sara White, Oklahoma City, OK
Sherry Wiedow, Marshfield, WI

Readers Share Study Tips

The Winter issue of *Certification News* asked "What are your favorite test preparation tips?" Here's a sampling of the responses received.

"Study with a co-worker who is also seeking certification! It keeps you motivated and makes it a little more fun!"

Jennifer Stull
Childrens Memorial Hospital
Chicago, IL

"I am very big on highlighting. I use multiple colors that coordinate with the Test Blueprint. I also went to as many of the hematology lectures as possible at the last Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses Annual Conference and plan to use those outlines as resources as I prepare for the CPHON[®] examination."

Kathy Trimble
Central DuPage Hospital
Winfield, IL

Readers Respond

As a formal or informal leader in your practice area, how do you encourage professional development?

E-mail your responses to oncc@ons.org.
Please include "Readers Respond" in your subject line.

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Ex Officio

ONCC Mission Statement

The mission of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation is to promote and provide oncology nursing certification for the enhancement of patient care and professional practice.

The Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation was established for the development, administration, and evaluation of a program for certification in oncology nursing. Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation, 125 Enterprise Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1214 (+1-877-769-ONCC or +1-412-859-6104, phone; +1-412-859-6168, fax; oncc@ons.org, e-mail; www.oncc.org, Web site)