



certification/news

The Newsletter of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation
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ONCC Honors Certified Nurses at Recognition Breakfast

Michael Smart, RN, BSN, OCN®

Each year, ONCC recognizes the contributions of individuals and organizations to the mission of oncology nursing certification at the Recognition Breakfast for Oncology Certified Nurses held during the annual ONS Congress. A popular event, this year's breakfast in Philadelphia, PA, was no exception, with 1,000 oncology certified nurses in attendance. In the photo below are the recipients of the ONCC Employer Recognition Award, the Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year Award, the OCN® of the Year Award, and the first Pearl Moore Certification Champion Award as well

as Carlton Brown, PhD, APRN, AOCN®, the previous president of ONCC.

The keynote speaker was Dave Balch, founder and president of The Patient/Partner Project. Balch shared his story of the journey he and his wife undertook following her diagnosis with breast cancer. The lessons learned along the way led to the founding of The Patient/Partner Project, a multifaceted, long-term program that focuses on providing resources and information to assist partners of cancer survivors in coping with the challenges of supporting their loved ones.

(See "Recognition Breakfast," page 4)



Left to right: Award winners Mary Beth Reardon, RN, MS, CNAA, OCN®, Susan Yackzan, RN, MSN, AOCN®, Colleen O'Leary, RN, BSN, OCN®, and Linda Rodgers Emory with the previous ONCC President Carlton Brown, PhD, APRN, AOCN®.

2008 Renewal Applications Due September 15

Nurses who are renewing their certification in 2008 by the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option (ONC-PRO) should apply by September 15. Certified nurses who submit complete applications and ONC-PRO logs by this date will save \$75 on the fee. All ONC-PRO applications and logs for 2008 certification renewal must be received by October 15, with the full, non-discounted fee. Please go to <http://www.oncc.org/renewal/oncpro.shtml> for more information. Certification cannot be renewed after it expires. Nurses who do not renew their credential prior to its expiration will need to meet the eligibility criteria for initial certification and pass the test to become certified again in the future.



President's Message

Oncology Nursing: What an Amazing Journey

Vicki J. Norton, RN, BSN, OCN®

I want to begin by thanking Carlton Brown, APRN, PhD, AOCN®, for his vision and leadership of the ONCC Board of Directors. My hope is to continue to strive for excellence and relevance for all certified oncology nurses, patients with cancer, and communities in which we live.

I first became an oncology certified nurse seven years after I began my journey in oncology nursing. Now I wonder, "What took me so long?" While I was studying for the test, I realized that there were many things about oncology nursing that I wished I had known earlier in my career. That knowledge would have helped me to be more effective and to better understand my patients. After receiving my certification, I was so proud that I began

encouraging other nurses to become certified. When the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program (ONCAP) started, I immediately signed on for my organization. An ONCC Board position was advertised, and I wanted to be involved in the organization that raised my standard of nursing care. I sent in an application three years ago, and here I am now, starting my year as the president of ONCC. It has been an amazing journey—one that I would encourage you to consider. Get certified and get involved. You will never regret it.

In his article on page 5, Carlton mentions three initiatives that the ONCC Board has worked on. I would like to call attention to some other ongoing work. The Board is

supporting a grant to fund research examining patient outcomes related to oncology nursing certification. The grant has been awarded and is in the data collection phase. We also are working with ONCAP to give the advocates more resources and support. An annual luncheon for ONCAP is held during the ONS Congress, and a new online virtual office is available for advocates. Lastly, we are examining oncology nursing globally—specifically, what other countries and organizations are doing with oncology certification.

It is an exciting time to be involved in oncology nursing and especially certification. I am looking forward to the coming year with its challenges and opportunities in maintaining excellence in oncology nursing certification.



Editor's Message

Returning to a Mailbox Near You: The ONCC Certification News!

Heather Mackey, RN, MSN, ANP, AOCN®

This issue of the *ONCC Certification News* marks the return of a printed and mailed version of the newsletter. Last year, the ONCC Board of Directors decided to return to a print version for two of the four issues in 2008. This decision was made based on trends seen in the readership numbers following the conversion to an electronic-only format and information collected in the recent reader survey. The ONCC Board of Directors and the *ONCC Certification News* Editorial Board strongly believe that this publication serves as a vital source of communication between ONCC and oncology certified

nurses everywhere. We hope that you find this newsletter to be a useful and timely source of information regarding certification and renewal deadlines, upcoming changes to testing procedures and examinations, and events, awards, and achievements.

You still can access the newsletter in its electronic format at www.oncc.org. Longtime readers of the *ONCC News*, and now the *ONCC Certification News*, will notice that the newsletter has a new appearance and format. Let us know what you think! Contact the Editorial Board via e-mail at oncc@ons.org.

Last Chance to Apply for 2008 AOCNP® and AOCNS® Tests

Nurses who wish to take an AOCNP® or AOCNS® test in 2008 should apply by September 1. If eligible, the candidate will receive an authorization to test in four to six weeks that provides for a 90-day testing window. AOCNP® and AOCNS® candidates may apply after September 1; however, they may not have a full 90-day testing window in 2008.

More information and application forms are available at <http://www.oncc.org/getcertified/TestInformation/index.shtml>.



Meet the Staff of ONCC

Janice Nuuhiwa, RN, MSN, APN/CNS, CPON®

In the spring issue, Cyndi Miller Murphy, RN, MSN, CAE, ONCC executive director, shared information about her role and responsibilities within the organization. This issue will introduce the dedicated professionals who work under the direction of Murphy to provide the many services offered by ONCC.

Mary Wozny, BS, certification operations manager, is responsible for the management of ONCC operations and supervising the customer service team. Wozny stated, "There is always something going on in the office—testing windows, application deadlines, board meeting preparations, compiling candidate/test statistics, implementing new policies and procedures, and launching new programs. Something exciting and energetic is always happening." Certified nurses should know that the ONCC team is available to answer any questions you may have. The phones are covered from 8:30 am–5 pm (EST) Monday through Friday, and queries can be e-mailed at anytime to oncc@ons.org. ONCC staff are very knowledgeable about all phases of the certification process. The customer service staff can direct nurses to free or low-cost accredited continuing education (CE) programs, assist in determining whether a nurse meets the eligibility criteria, decipher if a program or activity meets the criteria for Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option (ONC-PRO), and provide technical support for online resources.

Pam Asfahani, BS, product manager, plans and implements marketing strategies for ONCC products and

services. She also provides staff support to various volunteer committees, such as the *ONCC Certification News* Editorial Board. Asfahani enjoys the many challenges her role affords her. She especially likes integrating creativity into traditional business planning through writing and designing promotional pieces and informational materials.

Annette Parry Bush, RN, OCN®, certification programs manager, was a member of the ONS Education Team before recently transitioning to her ONCC position. She is responsible for all facets of test development, including role delineation studies, item writing, working with the testing vendor, and approving the final product. She enjoys being a part of ONCC and appreciates connecting with certified nurses from across the country. Bush is passionate about promoting the message that certification enhances patient care and professional practice.

Joyce Mills, certification specialist, provides customer service and processes applications for ONCC tests and ONC-PRO. She enjoys communicating with nurses and is delighted when she can attend ONS Congress and match faces to the names of those she has built relationships with over time. Mills would like certified nurses to know that a great deal of time and attention is given to the applications processed at the ONCC office. Mills and her colleagues also can advise certified nurses about the many Web sites that offer CE opportunities.

Susan Bachner, certification specialist, processes certification applications, checks eligibility for ONCC tests and ONC-PRO renewal, and responds to e-mail and telephone inquiries from candidates and potential candidates. Bachner also provides technical support to candidates with online

(See "Meet the Staff," page 5)



Left to right: Front row: Annette Parry Bush, RN, OCN®, Joyce Mills, and Susan Bachner. Middle row: Cyndi Miller Murphy, RN, MSN, CAE, Linda Moore Houser, Mary Wozny, BS, and Pam Asfahani, BS. Back row: Christina Ryan. Not pictured: Joyce Althenhof.



Recognition Breakfast *(Continued from page 1)*

Michael Smart, RN, BSN, OCN®

To sign up for a free newsletter, access valuable resources, or learn more about the project, visit the program's Web site at www.theppp.org.

Also at the breakfast, Linda Rodgers Emory, was presented with the first Pearl Moore Certification Champion Award. The award was established to recognize individuals, groups, or organizations that have championed the cause of certification in oncology.

Emory, a cancer survivor herself, was impressed with the care provided by certified oncology nurses during her treatment and subsequently donated \$10,000 to establish a fund at the Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City in support of nurses pursuing certification. To date, more than 40 nurses at the medical center have pursued certification, in large part because of Emory's contribution. The daughter of composer Richard Rodgers, Emory also serves as a board member for the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function in New York, which provides music therapy services to those with neurologic diseases.

Susan Yackzan, RN, MSN, AOCN®, of Central Baptist Hospital in Lexington, KY, received the AOCN® of the Year Award. "Her professional impact is unprecedented in demonstrating the value of advanced oncology nursing practice," said her colleagues in nominating her. Yackzan once commented that her favorite part of being a clinical nurse specialist was the opportunity for interactions with patients and their families. In her own words, "Patients need advocates who understand their treatment plan, who can

help make the plan understandable, and who can challenge the healthcare environment to be patient-focused." An ONCC advocate since 2002, she strongly advocates the cause of certification to those around her. Locally, she has initiated chapter fund-raising to assist others in becoming certified, teaches review courses, and promotes certification within her chapter. She also teaches the ONS Chemotherapy/Biotherapy course. In accepting her award, Yackzan expressed gratitude to those who have mentored her over the years, stating that "accomplishments are not done in isolation."

Colleen O'Leary, RN, MSN, OCN®, a staff educator at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, IL, received the OCN® of the Year Award. Recognizing the need to nurture oncology nurses for the future, she often promotes the benefits of certification to new nurse graduates in addition to speaking at high schools and colleges about oncology nursing. At Northwestern, O'Leary developed a mentoring program in which candidates for certification are paired with certified nurses. She also teaches review courses at her facility and in her local chapter. In addition, she organized a journal club at Northwestern to focus on evidence-based practice and participated in developing the ONS Putting Evidence Into Practice® (PEP) resource card for preventing infection. O'Leary currently is serving on project teams to develop an online nursing research course for ONS and to make revisions to PEP cards.

Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, FL, was acknowledged for its exceptional commitment to oncology nursing certification with the ONCC Employer Recognition Award. At Moffitt, the clinical ladder program requires certification for advancement to the higher levels. Nurses are reimbursed for examination expenses, regardless of whether a passing score is obtained on the first attempt, and renewal costs also are covered. Review courses are provided on-site, and bonuses of \$1,000 are awarded for obtaining and renewing certification. Moffitt also provides paid time off for nurses to participate in professional organizations, making it easier for staff members to participate in ONCC item-writing workshops and to serve on committees. Nurses who become certified are formally recognized during National Nurses Week. Announcements are made in institutional newsletters, via the institutional intranet, within unit or department newsletters, and in regional publications. Unit-based celebrations are held for the nurses, and recognition plaques are displayed. Credentials also are displayed on name badges and business cards. Leading by example, Chief Nursing Officer Mary Beth Reardon, RN, MS, OCN®, maintains her certification, and all of the medical-oncology and surgical-oncology inpatient managers are certified.

Read more about the award winners at <http://www.oncc.org/awards>. Congratulations to each of this year's award winners and many thanks for all that you do to promote oncology nursing and oncology nursing certification.



Farewell but Not Goodbye

Carlton Brown, APRN, PhD, AOCN®

Three short years ago, you, the certified nurses, entrusted me with your vote to serve as a member of the ONCC Board of Directors. It is hard to believe that my term, which culminated in serving as president of ONCC, has ended. During my term, the ONCC Board made significant changes and took on new initiatives that it believes will serve oncology nurses well over the next decade. I would like to discuss three initiatives of which I am most proud.

First, we moved to a new testing partner—Pearson Vue—and, according to the evaluation data, the vast majority of you are very pleased with the improved services offered. This was not an easy move but one that we strongly

felt would better serve our certified nurses and would allow us to offer tests securely to the international market.

Second, we decided to begin the creation of subspecialty certification programs. The certified breast care nurse examination will begin in February 2009. Other plans exist for potential subspecialty programs, particularly in the areas of radiation and stem cell transplantation.

Third, ONCC actively is involved in the ever-changing world of the advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). During the recent ONS Congress in Philadelphia, PA, we presented a special session on APRN regulation, including an overview of the new APRN Regulatory

Model developed through a joint process implemented by representatives of specialty nursing certifying boards, educators, accreditors, and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Slides from the presentation can be found on the ONCC Web site (www.ons.org).

In closing, thank you for allowing me to serve on the ONCC Board. I am happy to report that ONCC is an incredible organization with plans to serve oncology nurses for decades to come. ONCC is in competent hands with an amazingly dedicated all-volunteer board and a staff that works diligently to continue the excellence associated with the organization. Farewell!

Meet the Staff *(continued from page 3)*

registration problems. Bachner enjoys corresponding with nurses and answering questions that will help them achieve certification. Like Mills, she enjoys attending Congress and meeting many of the certified nurses. Bachner would like certified nurses to know that she is always willing to help them with any inquiries they may have about certification.

Joyce Altenhof, customer service representative, worked as an ONCC clerk for seven years before recently transitioning to her current role. Altenhof tends to the needs of certified nurses, including processing certification test applications, working on ONC-PRO logs, and performing data management. She enjoys her job and working with her colleagues, and she especially likes ensuring resources

are accessible to certified nurses. Joyce cites the *ONCC Certification News* and ONCC Web site (www.oncc.org) as the best resources to use to become and stay connected to certification.

Linda Moore Houser, customer service representative, is a recent addition to the ONCC staff. In addition to answering customers' questions, verifying credentials, and processing applications and payments, Houser, along with Altenhof, prepares the recognition plaques awarded to institutions and offices with greater than 50% of their nurses certified. She also generates the certificates and wallet cards that nurses receive once they become certified. Houser enjoys the diversity of her role and relishes the idea of working on many different projects throughout the day. Houser appreciates

the collegiality in the office. Her advice to certified nurses is "When you're not finding the information you need, give us a call or send us an e-mail so we can help."

Christina Ryan, executive assistant, provides administrative assistance to the executive director, ONCC associates, and the ONCC Board of Directors. Ryan enjoys "working with so many talented and dedicated individuals." Although she primarily works with the ONCC Board and committees, Ryan wants certified nurses to know that she is always available to assist them with any questions they may have.

These eight individuals have much to offer certified nurses and anyone seeking certification. Feel free to contact them if you ever need assistance.

Institutions Recognized for Certified Nursing Staff

Forty-five institutions recently were presented with recognition plaques for staffing their facilities with oncology certified nurses. ONCC provides these plaques free of charge to any patient care setting in which a majority of the professional nurses are ONCC certified.

To request a plaque, or a replacement certificate for an existing plaque, download the application at http://www.oncc.org/awards/docs/Plaque_OrderformFeb2006.pdf.

Congratulations to the following institutions!

Addison Gilbert Hospital, Oncology/Medical Day Care, Gloucester, MA

Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, Oncology, Park Ridge, IL

American CancerCare, Evansville, IN

Associates in Oncology/Hematology, PC, Rockville, MD

Boice-Willis Clinic, Oncology, Rocky Mount, NC

Cancer Care Associates-Mercy, Oklahoma City, OK

Christus Schumpert, Cancer Treatment Center, Shreveport, LA

Commonwealth Hematology Oncology, Haverhill, MA

Cotton-O'Neil Cancer Center, Topeka, KS

CVPH Medical Center, Fitzpatrick Cancer Center, Plattsburgh, NY

David Grant Medical Center, Hematology/Oncology Clinic, Travis Air Force Base, CA

East Texas Medical Center, Cancer Institute, Tyler

The Family Cancer Center, Oxford, MS

FHN, Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center, Freeport, IL

Greeley Medical Clinic, PC, Oncology/Hematology, Colorado

Harris Methodist HEB Hospital, Oncology Care Unit, Bedford, TX

Hematology-Oncology Associates of Central New York, East Syracuse

Henrico Doctors' Hospital, Evaluation Clinic, Richmond, VA

Henrico Doctors' Hospital, Infusion Services, Forest Campus, Richmond, VA

Henrico Doctors' Hospital, Radiation Oncology, Richmond, VA

Henrico Doctors' Hospital, Research and Screening, Richmond, VA

Henry Ford Health System/Josephine Ford Cancer Center, Hematology-Oncology, Dearborn, MI

Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah, Infusion Center, Salt Lake City

James Cancer Hospital, James Care Outpatient Chemotherapy Department, Dublin, OH

Kimball Medical Center, Outpatient Infusion, Lakewood, NJ

Kootenai Medical Center, Kootenai Cancer Center, Coeur d'Alene, ID

Lehigh Valley Hospital Cancer Center at Muhlenberg, Multi-Purpose Satellite, Bethlehem, PA

Lehigh Valley Hospital, John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center, Multi-Purpose Area, Allentown, PA

Maine Center for Cancer Medicine and Blood Disorders, Scarborough

M.D. Anderson Physician's Network, Houston, TX

Mercy Medical Center Redding, Ida C. Emmerson Oncology Unit, California

Moffitt Cancer Center, Clinical Nurse Specialists in Tampa, FL

Moffitt Cancer Center, Head and Neck Clinic, Tampa, FL

Northside Hospital, Outpatient Infusion Center, Atlanta, GA

Oak Forest Hospital, Oncology Department, Illinois

Ocean Medical Center, 4 East Oncology, Brick, NJ

Orange Coast Oncology Hematology, Newport Beach, CA

Porter Adventist Hospital, Cypress Hematology and Oncology, Denver, CO

RadAmerica-Clinton Site, Radiation Oncology, Maryland

Samaritan Hospital, Cancer Treatment Center, Troy, NY

Star Hematology and Medical Oncology Associates, Phillipsburg, NJ

Straub Clinic and Hospital, Outpatient Treatment Center, Honolulu, HI

UPMC Cancer Center, New Castle, PA

Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care, Burlington

Veterans Administration, Infusion Clinic, Reno, NV

Employer Spotlight

Exemplifying Excellence at Arizona Pediatric Hematology Oncology

Tiffany Zook, RN, BSN, CPON®

Nursing certification is a vital aspect of practice at Arizona Pediatric Hematology Oncology on the campus of Banner Children's Hospital in Mesa, AZ. From the inception of this relatively young practice, Program

Chair Hardeo Panchoosingh, MD, has valued professional development and encouraged his nursing staff to achieve certification in all applicable areas of practice. In fact, it is an expectation. "Oncology nursing is a very specific

field of practice, and I am committed to our nursing staff having great depth of knowledge to support them in their practice," says Panchoosingh. "The CPON® certification is paramount to our practice because the knowledge, skills, and depth of understanding required to achieve it is what I expect of our nursing staff." He continues by stating that "From day one, working as a nurse in our practice, I expect that the nurses have either achieved CPON® certification or are striving toward this goal." Currently 80% of the clinic nurses are CPON® certified, and the remainder are working toward taking the certification examination. Banner Children's Hospital also supports this effort by offering complete reimbursement for examination fees upon passing the examination. Arizona Pediatric Hematology Oncology is committed to providing comprehensive, compassionate, family-centered care and prides itself in offering a professional, experienced, and committed staff of nurses.



Left to right: front: Jane Perlstein, RN, Maureen Cahill, RN, APN, MSN, AOCN®, Carolyn Scheer, RN, BSN, CPON®, Mary Ann Collom, RN, and Valerie Schwehr, RN, BS, CPON®. Back: Tiffany Zook, RN, BSN, CPON®, Sasha Gurrola, RN, CPON®, Laurie Smith, RN, MSN, CPON®, and Dr. Hardeo Panchoosingh, MD.

American Board of Nursing Specialties Selects Certification Award Winner

The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) announced that Orlando Regional Healthcare (ORH), Florida, was selected as the recipient of the 2008 ABNS Award for Nursing Certification Advocacy.

In 2004, ORH developed and implemented the Set the Pace program, which endorses more than 72 national specialty nursing certifications and encourages registered nurses to achieve

and maintain certification in their area of practice. The program has resulted in an increase in the number of certified nurses at the bedside.

Among the criteria necessary to win this award, the organization must document the percentage of direct patient care RNs and nursing managers who are certified in specialty nursing and how the organization supports nurses interested in seeking certification.

Readers Respond

What would encourage you to make the commitment to volunteer?

Send your response to oncc@ons.org or fax to ONCC at 412-859-6168. Please include "Reader's Respond" in your subject line.



Nurses Advocating for Certification

The following certified nurses recently joined ONCC's Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program. Advocates are certified nurses who volunteer to promote the benefits of certification in their workplace, chapter, or community.

Barbara Abeytia, Las Vegas, NV
Sharia Aviles, New York, NY
Lucille Bautista, New York, NY
Kim Bland, Omaha, NE
Maryanne Bletscher, Portland, OR
Angela Brown, Montgomery, AL
Corinne Brown, Sarasota, FL
Theresa Carney, Cocoa Beach, FL
Kimberly Catania, Columbus, OH
Susan Childress, Salt Lake City, UT
Ilene Comeras, Columbus, OH
Kimberly Deems, Columbus, OH
Laura Galunas, Ann Arbor, MI
Helen Harrison, Gainesville, FL
Karen Harrison, Pittsburgh, PA
Lucy Hertel, St. Louis, MO
Patricia Hinckley, Bristol, CT

Gennie Howe, Plano, TX
Kristie Howlett, Roseville, CA
Marcia Jacobson, Westwood, KS
David Leos, Houston, TX
MaryAnn Long, Buffalo, NY
Kathleen Madden, New York, NY
Wilma McCray, Jackson, MS
Kristen McGarry, Basking Ridge, NJ
Nancy Merriman, Columbus, OH
Ann Mertes, Waite Park, MN
Carole Mitchell, New York, NY
Marjorie Mosley, New York, NY
Sue Partusch, Cincinnati, OH
Janet Pipitone, Lawrenceville, GA
Karen Roesser, Richmond, VA
Mary Ross, Albuquerque, NM
Lawrence Scarbrough, Irving, TX
Deborah Selm-Orr, Philadelphia, PA
Angela Spruill, Chapel Hill, NC
Karin Stalter, New York, NY
Jane Vortherms, St. Cloud, MN
Katherine Wanstall, Charleston, SC
Linda Wuest, Porter, TX
Lyn Zehner, Alexandria, VA

ONCC Certification News

Editorial Board

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Janice Nuuhiwa, RN, MSN, APN/CNS, CPON®
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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 (877-769-ONCC or 412-859-6104, phone; 412-859-6168, fax; oncc@ons.org, e-mail; www.oncc.org, Web site)