



certification/news

The Newsletter of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation
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Have You Voted?

Ashley Leak, PhD, RN-BC, OCN®

In 2006, ONCC moved from a paper ballot to a Web-based voting process for selection of the Board of Directors. Despite the convenience of online voting, the number of responses could be much higher. The ONCC election is upon us, and as a certified oncology nurse, your vote counts!

Three candidates are running for one open position on the ONCC Board of Directors. The election opened November 12—have you voted yet?

All voting is completed online; no votes are cast by paper ballots. Voting must be completed by December 18.

Professional information about the candidates appears on the ballot. Each candidate's response to the question "How

would you fulfill the mission of ONCC?" appears in this article. Additional information about the candidates is on the ONCC Web site (www.oncc.org).

Nurses who were ONCC certified as of October 1 will be eligible to vote. Check your e-mail for a message from the ONCC election administrator for the link to your personalized ballot.

The order in which candidates are listed is determined by computerized random selection, and the candidates will appear in the same order on the online ballot as they appear in this article.

(See "Three Candidates" on page 6)



Lions, Tigers, and Test Taking . . . Oh my!

Jeri Ashley, MSN, RN, AOCNS®, CHPN

Fear of taking tests is a common source of anxiety. It stems in part from doubts about one's ability to take tests. ONCC exams include multiple-choice test items to evaluate critical thinking and mastery of oncology nursing knowledge. The use of sound test-taking strategies can give a candidate a sense of control over test questions and lessen one's sense of anxiety.

To begin, examine the structure of a multiple-choice item. The three components are

- **Stem:** This is the part of the item that contains the necessary facts that you need to choose the correct answer. Put another way, it contains the problem to be addressed.
- **Background Information:** Found in the body of the stem is information related to the problem; however, these added facts do not necessarily assist in answering the question.
- **Options:** In ONCC's multiple-choice items, four answer op-

tions are provided. Only one is the correct answer, while the other three serve as distracters. Use the "anatomy of test questions" in the following test-taking strategies.

Read the stem with attention to the details. One overlooked or misread word can change your thought process as you proceed to the options.

Know what the question is asking before reviewing the options. A common mistake reported is a nurse "recognizing" an option as an important fact that was learned; however, this option does not answer the question. We become drawn to the familiar. One suggestion for avoiding familiarity bias is to not look at the answers until you clearly have determined what the question is asking.

Pay attention to only the facts presented in the stem and background. Do not "read into the question," for this can

(See "Test-Taking Strategies" on page 7)



Editor's Message

Encouraging Peer Certification Is Important

Ashley Leak, PhD, RN-BC, OCN®

I attended my first ONCC Board of Directors meeting, which was held during ONS Leadership Weekend July 20–21 in Pittsburgh, PA. It was a great opportunity to meet other ONCC committee chairs, the ONCC Board of Directors, and ONCC staff members. In this issue, Michael Smart, RN, BSN, OCN®, highlights important details discussed at the ONCC Board Meeting.

As we move into a new “volunteer” year, let us not forget the importance of supporting and encouraging our peers to become certified. Certification is a personal and professional accomplishment recognized by patients, our peers, other health professionals, and our employers. Wear your certification credential proudly on your badge, scrub top, or lab coat.

You'll notice we have added some new features to the newsletter that we feel are important. Each issue will update you with the most current number of oncology certified nurses. We also will highlight review questions in each issue, and our newest Editorial Board member, Michele Farrington, RN, BSN, CPHON®, will provide pediatric updates to the readers. Many of us who practice in adult oncology are not familiar with the happenings in the pediatric oncology nursing world, so we all can benefit from sharing information.

Please share your stories with the ONCC Certification News Editorial Board (oncc@oncc.org). We want to hear from you; share your stories and experiences with us!



ONCC Board Update

BMT Certification Program Set to Begin February 2014

Michael Smart, RN, BSN, OCN®

The Board of Directors met in July in conjunction with Leadership Weekend in Pittsburgh, PA. The opportunity to meet with oncology nurse leaders from around the country always is exciting. During these annual meetings, feedback received from certified nurses, as well as from those thinking about certification, is an important factor in evaluating how we are meeting the needs of nurses. The following are some highlights from the ONCC Board Meeting.

The Blood and Marrow Transplant certification program has an anticipated roll-out date of February 2014. The Board voted to offer a fee discount of \$50 for candidates who register for the first administration of this exam. The program will include content on pediatric and adult populations, as well as autologous and allogeneic transplants. The credential awarded will be BMTCN (Blood and Marrow Transplantation Certified Nurse). Details regarding eligibility criteria still are to be finalized. ONCC will be seeking volunteers who practice in this area to assist with test development, item writing, and passing score activities. Watch your e-mails and the ONCC Web site (www.oncc.org) for calls to volunteer.

The Board reviewed recertification options for AOCN® and

CPON® certified nurses who do not have the nursing practice hours needed to meet eligibility criteria for renewal. Typically, when a nurse doesn't have the practice hours for renewal, the nurse can renew by Option 3, which includes successful retesting and completion of the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option (ONC-PRO). Because AOCN® and CPON® exams no longer are offered, Option 3 is not available for renewal of these credentials. This means that the only renewal option for AOCN® and CPON® certified nurses is practice hours and ONC-PRO. The Board considered possible alternative renewal options for AOCN® and CPON® without practice hours. The Board decided to keep the current policy, which requires nursing practice hours. A significant factor in the Board's decision was the need to maintain the meaning and rigor of ONCC certifications as well as accreditation standards.

Paper application forms no longer will be included in the ONCC Test Bulletin, beginning with the 2013 bulletin. Most candidates apply for certification using the online application process. Paper applications will be available for printing from the ONCC Web site (www.oncc.org), but the intention is to move to an online-only registration process in 2014.



Pediatric Corner

Michele Farrington, BSN, RN, CPHON®



Each issue of Certification News will have a section for pediatric hematology-oncology nurses. What does your institution, organization, unit, or clinic do to recognize certified nurses? How did you study for the certification test? What other ideas do you have for this section in the future? Please e-mail any suggestions or feedback to michele-farrington@uiowa.edu to make this the part of the newsletter not to be missed by pediatric hematology-oncology nurses.

ONCC Certification for Pediatric Nurses: The Basics

Any pediatric nurses caring for children or adolescents affected by a blood disorder or cancer should consider specialty certification.

The credential bestowed on nurses after meeting testing criteria and passing the 165-item exam is Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse (CPHON®). Recognition as a CPHON®-certified nurse provides professional growth and development, as well as increased recognition from colleagues, employers, patients, and families regarding the nurses' knowledge about the care of pediatric

patients for hematology-oncology.

CPHON® nurses are recognized at the ONCC Recognition Breakfast for Oncology Certified Nurses during the annual Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON) conference.

CPHON® and CPON® certified nurses also are eligible for the Certified Pediatric Oncology Nurse of the Year Award. ONCC presents the award each year during the recognition breakfast. The award is given to a nurse based on his or her professional contribution to pediatric hematology-oncology nursing and support of certification in this specialty area.

Stay tuned to meet the 2012 CPHON® of the Year Award winner in the next issue of *Certification News*, along with pictures from the 2012 APHON conference.

Test Your Knowledge

ONCC practice items offer you a sample of the types of items you can find on an actual certification exam. They are also a fun way to test yourself and what you know about different topics in oncology nursing. This issue's item is based on a pediatric example. Do you know the correct answer, and why it is correct?

An adolescent with cancer and his family members meet to discuss homecare needs for discharge. The patient will require IV fluids and medication; oxygen; and nebulizer treatments. To assure safety in the home, the nurse recommends notifying

- A. emergency medical, telephone, and electrical services of the homecare needs.
- B. neighbors about the potential hazardous materials being disposed in the trash.
- C. local law enforcement about the large amounts of narcotics in the home.
- D. public works about the disposal of chemotherapy in the trash.

Answer: A

Rationale: By notifying community emergency rescue and area water, telephone, and electrical services of the complex needs in the home, these services can respond promptly if service is disrupted in the home.

Bibliography:

Baggot, C.R. (2002). *Nursing care of children and adolescents with cancer* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: W.B. Saunders.

Certified Nurses Recognized for Outstanding Contributions

Congratulations to Nancy Tomczak, BSN, RN, OCN®, of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, TX, and Melanie Simpson, PhD, RN-BC, OCN®, CHPN, of University of Kansas Hospital in Kansas City, KS, for receiving 2012 National Magnet Nurse of the Year Awards™.

National Magnet Nurse of the Year Awards™ are presented by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to

recognize outstanding contributions of clinical nurses in each of the five Magnet® model components.

Tomczak received the award for Transformational Leadership. She was recognized for revolutionizing the Nursing Practice Congress at her institution by bringing in multidisciplinary members and increasing engagement to achieve workable, interdisciplinary

solutions to clinical issues.

Simpson received the award for Exemplary Professional Practice. She was honored for her innovative approach to incorporating evidence-based pain management strategies into practice.

Tomczak and Simpson were presented with the awards during the recent ANCC National Magnet Conference® in Los Angeles, CA. Congratulations!

57 Organizations Receive Plaques for Commitment to Certification

ONCC recently presented 57 employers with recognition plaques to acknowledge the organizations for staffing their facilities with oncology certified nurses. ONCC offers the plaques free of charge to any patient care setting where more than 50% of the RNs are ONCC certified.

To apply for a plaque, go to <http://www.oncc.org/Awards/Plaques>.

Congratulations to these organizations for their commitment to certification in oncology nursing.

Antelope Valley Cancer Center in Lancaster, CA
 Atlantic Hematology Oncology Associates in Manasquan, NJ
 Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas, Baptist Cancer Center in Beaumont, TX
 Baptist Medical Associates, Consulting in Blood Disorders and Cancer Group, Baptist Hospital East in Louisville, KY
 Beverly Hospital, Outpatient Oncology Clinic in Beverly, MA
 Cancer Center at Taylor Regional Hospital, Taylor Regional Medical Oncology in Campbellsville, KY
 Cancer Center at Willamette Valley Medical Center, Hematology/Oncology Division in McMinnville, OR
 Carolinas Medical Center, Levine Cancer Institute in Charlotte, NC
 Central Baptist Hospital, Richmond Infusion Clinic in Richmond, KY
 Central Baptist Hospital, Richmond Outpatient Infusion in Lexington, KY
 Children's Hospital Boston, Hematology/Oncology 6 North in Boston, MA
 Christiana Care Health System, Helen F. Graham Cancer Center, Community Outreach in Newark, DE
 Dartmouth Hitchcock, Norris Cotton Cancer Center in Manchester, NH

Fletcher Allen Health Care, Vermont Cancer Center, Hematology/Oncology Clinic in Burlington, VT
 Franciscan Alliance St. James Health in Olympia Fields, IL
 Froedtert Hospital, Blood and Marrow Transplant in Milwaukee, WI
 Hahnemann University Hospital, Center for Gynecology Oncology in Philadelphia, PA
 Hillcrest Hospital, Hirsch Cancer Center in Mayfield Heights, OH
 Holy Cross Radiation Therapy Center, Radiation Oncology in Mission Hills, CA
 Huntsville Hospital, St. Jude Affiliate Clinic in Huntsville, AL
 Indiana University Central Indiana Cancer Center South in Indianapolis, IN
 James Graham Brown Cancer Center, Blood and Marrow Transplant Outpatient Program in Louisville, KY
 James H. Quillen VHS, Outpatient Hematology/Oncology Unit in Mt. Home, TN
 Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Ambulatory Oncology in Neptune, NJ
 Kaiser Permanente Medical Group, Adult Oncology in Vallejo, CA
 Levine Cancer Institute, Blumenthal Infusion Center in Charlotte, NC
 Little Company of Mary Hospital, Outpatient Medical Oncology Infusion Center in Evergreen Park, IL
 Magee-Womens Hospital of University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pittsburgh, PA
 McLaren Greater Lansing, Radiation Oncology in Lansing, MI
 Medical Arts Associates, Ltd., Oncology Department in Moline, IL
 MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, 2 Bles in Washington, DC
 MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, 3 Bles in Washington, DC
 Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center,

Radiation Oncology in New York, NY
 Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Radiation/Chemotherapy in Rockville Center, NY
 Mercy Oncology in Oklahoma City, OK
 Miriam Hospital, 4B in Providence, RI
 Morehead Memorial Hospital, Smith Michael Cancer Center in Eden, NC
 North Colorado Medical Center, Inpatient Oncology in Greeley, CO
 North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System, Radiation Medicine in New Hyde Park, NY
 Ohio State University James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute, Hematology and Transplant Clinic in Columbus, OH
 Ohio State University, James Care East in Columbus, OH
 Orange Regional Medical Center, Spagnoli Cancer Center in Middletown, NY
 Penn State Hershey Medical Group, Penn State Cancer Institute Benner Pike in State College, PA
 Riverside Health System, Radiation Oncology Services in Newport News, VA
 Riverside Shore Cancer Center, RSCC Medical Oncology in Nassawadox, VA
 Simmons Cancer Center UT Southwestern, Bone Marrow Transplant in Dallas, TX
 Smilow Cancer Hospital, Breast Center/Women's Infusion in New Haven, CT
 Speare Memorial Hospital, Oncology Clinic in Plymouth, NH
 St. Francis Hospital and Medical, 8-1 Oncology in Hartford, CT
 Stamford Hospital, Nurse Navigation, Bennett Cancer Center in Stamford, CT
 Tripler Army Medical Center, Hematology-Oncology Clinic in Honolulu, HI
 UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center, Infusion Center in La Jolla, CA
 United General Hospital, North Puget
(See "Employers" on page 5)



Certification Advocates Program Gains 35 New Members

Thirty-five oncology certified nurses recently signed on to ONCC's Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program. Advocates are oncology certified nurses who voluntarily promote the benefits of certification among their colleagues.

Seven hundred and eighty-nine advocates are now in the program. Please welcome the following members.

Sameeya Ahmed-Winston, Arlington, VA
 Amysue Bamberg, St. Petersburg, FL
 Deidre Belcher, Richmond, VA
 Lisa Bielinski, Anaheim, CA
 Laura Bittner, Farmington, CT

Angela Borkowski, St. Petersburg, FL
 Bernadette Canuso, Chester, PA
 Katherine Clements, Meriden, CT
 Catherine Cloninger, Helena, MT
 Mary Corwin, Rockville Centre, NY
 Rachael Crickman, Seattle, WA
 Keith Gilchrist, Bethesda, MD
 Susan Hartung, Omaha, NE
 Stephanie Hisey, Middletown, OH
 Renee Jahn, Schenectady, NY
 Dorothy Johnson, Albany, GA
 Shan Ju, Duarte, CA
 Kathleen Kelley-Smith, Los Angeles, CA
 Karen Klarkowski, Green Bay, WI
 Shirly Kooran, Lilburn, GA

Lianne Lopez, Duarte, CA
 Patricia Meyer, Omaha, NE
 Kendra Nelms, Houston, TX
 Elizabeth Northrup, Lewiston, ID
 Margaret Olson, Madison, IN
 Tulsi Patel, New York, NY
 Jillian Powers, Manassas, VA
 Sally Prokey, Portland, ME
 Norman Quilarto, Chicago, IL
 Teresa Rainey, Omaha, NE
 Edna Smith, Atlanta, GA
 Lisa Smith, Columbus, OH
 Karen Stephenson, Weston, FL
 Dwanna Ward-Boahen, Bridgeport, CT
 Jennifer Whitman, Burlington, NC

Employers Acknowledged for Staffing With Certified Nurses *(continued from page 4)*

Cancer Center in Sedro Woolley, WA
 University of North Carolina, UNC Cancer Network in Chapel Hill, NC
 University of Texas Health Science Cen-

ter, Cancer Treatment and Prevention Center in Tyler, TX
 Warren General Hospital, Cancer Care Center in Warren, PA

Wentworth Douglass Hospital, Seacoast Cancer Center in Dover, NH
 West Penn Allegheny Oncology Network, Mellon Office in Pittsburgh, PA

2013 Test Dates & Application Deadlines		
OCN®, CPHON®, & CBCN®		
Test Dates	Early Bird Application Deadlines (Save \$100)	Final Application Deadlines (Full Fee)
April 1–June 29, 2013 July 1–September 30, 2013 October 1–December 31, 2013 November 1–30, 2013 (international test sites) <i>Limited testing outside the United States and Canada in November only.</i>	January 2, 2013 April 3, 2013 July 1, 2013 July 17, 2013	January 16, 2013 April 17, 2013 July 17, 2013 July 31, 2013
AOCNP® & AOCNS®		
Test Dates	Deadline Dates	
February 1–December 31, 2013 <i>(test sites in the United States and Canada)</i>	AOCNP® and AOCNS® candidates testing in the United States and Canada may apply at any time. To ensure a 90-day testing window, apply by September 1.	
November 1–30, 2013 (international test sites)	Early Bird Deadline: July 17, 2013	Final Application Deadline: July 31, 2013

Three Candidates Run for Board of Directors Position *(continued from page 1)*



Rebecca (Becky) O'Shea
MS, RN, OCN®, AOCNS®,
CBCN®, CNS-M/S

Oncology CNS/Oncology Program Coordinator/Breast Center Navigator at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Denton in Denton, TX

"In 1977, as a new graduate nurse, I began my career at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, Canada. I wanted to work in cancer care because of my student experience with a family facing their young son's diagnosis of neuroblastoma. Thanks to the mentoring and support I received there, I traveled to Houston, TX, to pursue graduate studies and work at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. The United States was far more advanced in chemotherapy, and I wanted to learn more so that I could provide our patients and families with state-of-the-art care. Those early decisions set me on a course I will never regret, and 35 years later, I remain passionate about sharing my experiences and mentoring others to follow their dreams and promote the specialty of oncology nursing. Becoming involved in ONS and serving on a committee with ONCC have been invaluable to my ongoing development. ONCC's commitment to validating specialized knowledge in oncology nursing sets high standards for us all.

I am proud to hold three national oncology certifications and feel I owe a debt to all of you who have played a role in my life. I want to pay back and service in the profession I love. Throughout the continuum of care is how I intend to do it. Our future has never been brighter, but there is more work to do. Together as partners, we will continue

to build on the legacy that our visionary leaders have gifted."



Jean Rosiak
MSN, RN, ANP-BC,
AOCNP®, CBCN®

Nurse Practitioner at Aurora UW Academic Medical Group in Milwaukee, WI

"Nursing is a caring profession. Certification offers a means for nurses to express caring enough about their profession to develop proficiency in an area of specialization, as well as provide recognition for those who have attained that proficiency. Oncology nursing is a specialty that requires broad knowledge of the spectrum of disease, treatment, symptom management, survivorship, palliative, and end-of-life care. Preparation for the various ONCC exams and to maintain certification leads to the enhancement of a nurse's ability to provide evidence-based patient care and promotes professionalism.

In order to be meaningful, the rigorous requirements of the certification exams need to be maintained. The role of the ONCC board is to oversee the process and requirements of certification and maintain the integrity of the entire certification process. The rigor of exam development and the examination process is the charge of the ONCC board.

I have had the privilege of working with the committees delineating the role and developing the exams for the AOCNP® and CBCN® certifications. I understand the rigor and process of test development, construction, and validation. I currently hold dual certification as AOCNP® and CBCN®. My current involvement in ONCC is serving on the AOCNP® test development committee.

As a member of the ONCC board, I would serve as a steward of the integrity and meaningfulness of the certification process. Please consider my application to fill this responsible position."



Tara Baney
MS, ANP-BC, CRNP,
AOCN®

Oncology Nurse Practitioner at Penn State Hershey Medical Group-Oncology in State College, PA

"I have been certified as both an OCN® and AOCN®. I am very proud and honored to have obtained these credentials. I also am lucky to work for an institution that values certified nurses. Recently, our office has obtained a 100% certification amongst our RN staff. As I have promoted certification within my institution, I will also promote certification as a board member to other groups.

I am not only a certified nurse, but I have also served on the test development committee. I have insight into the extensive time and effort that goes into developing and preparing a quality test. As a board member, I will advocate for the test committee issues and needs so that they are able to build a quality exam. Over the past few years, ONCC has made several changes to the renewal process, which I believe will ensure that nurses are participating in educational activities that are geared more to their individual learning and professional development needs rather than just receiving continuing education credits. These types of changes are important to ensure that the certified nurse is continuing to learn so that he or she is able to provide upstanding

(See "Your Vote" on page 7)



Test-Taking Strategies Decrease Anxiety *(continued from page 1)*

contribute to a false sense of security that is based on assumptions—not the facts. Assuming certain facts should be present, you may add those to your decision making.

Use prioritization in responding to the correct option. For example, the “ABCs” of airway, breathing, and circulation is a way to think about prioritization. Questions asking, “What is the best response . . .” often require the process of prioritization. Read all four options carefully before making a decision. One

colleague reported that she prioritizes by thinking, “What is going to kill the patient first?”

Frequently, one has ambivalence toward the options that contribute to a sense of lost control over the test item. On those items, *use a process of elimination* to determine the correct response. Some test takers use a framework of “true-false” to examine the options. If you find that a part of an option is false, conclude that the complete option is false. Once you are left with one or two

options that could be correct, reread the question, then choose the best option to respond to the question.

At the end of the day, no test-taking strategy replaces knowledge of the subject content. Begin test preparation early to give ample time for mastery of the test blueprint content. Armed with content knowledge and test-taking strategies, you will feel less like the nurse sitting at the computer testing center, staring at the keyboard, saying, “I keep hitting ‘escape’ but I’m still here!”

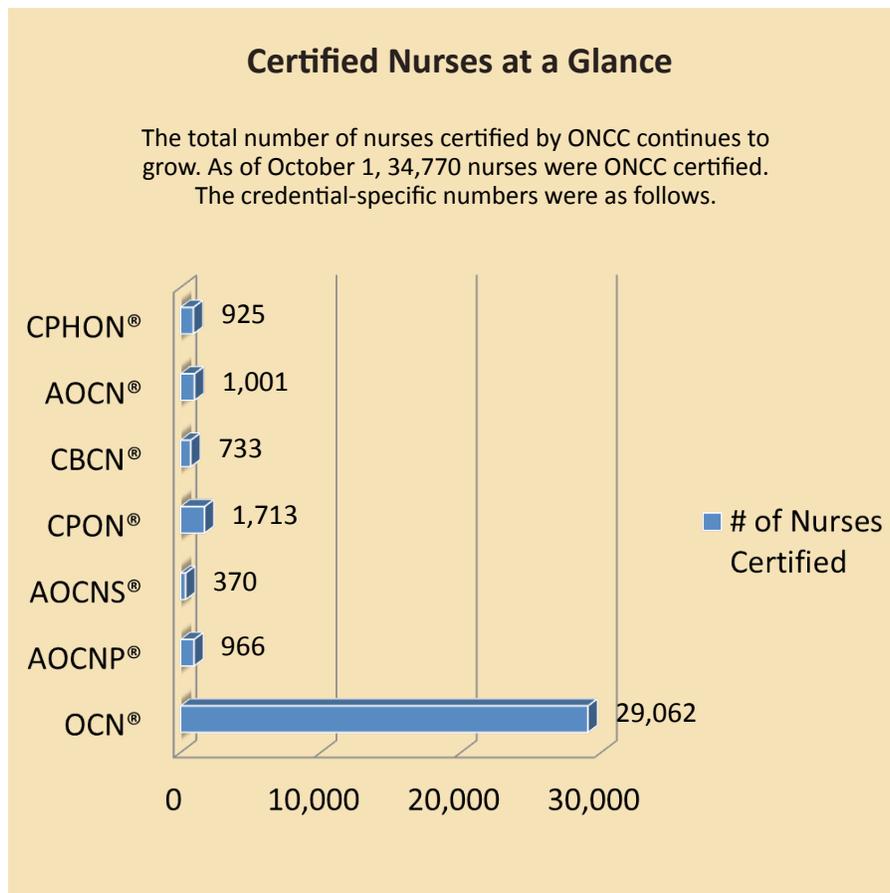
Your Vote Counts *(continued from page 6)*

patient care. I will continue to help explore and promote changes that foster the ongoing learning, which will enhance patient care and professional

practice, if I am elected to the board.”

Watch your e-mail for additional information from ONCC, and cast your vote!

Your vote counts, and we want to hear it!



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ONCC Mission Statement

The mission of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation is to promote excellence in patient care and professional practice by validating specialized knowledge in oncology nursing and related specialties.

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@oncc.org, e-mail; www.oncc.org, Web site)