



certification/news

The Newsletter of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation
Volume XXX1, No.1

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ONS and ONCC: Two organizations working together for oncology nurses

Theresa Gannon and Erica Fischer-Carlidge

The Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) and the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) are frequently confused and thought to be the same entity. In fact, they are two separate, yet affiliated organizations with unique, but related, missions.

When ONS began to explore certification in the mid-1980s, it became clear that establishing a separate corporation to develop and administer a certification program was needed. ONCC develops and administers certification exams that validate competence in oncology nursing; ONS is the professional membership or-

ganization for oncology nurses. In collaboration, they are partners in ensuring that oncology nurses have access to resources and professional development needed to provide high quality, patient-centered, and evidence-based care. ONS members receive discounts on ONCC certification exams and re-

newal; certified nurses frequently utilize the education provided by ONS to meet recertification requirements. Together these organizations support oncology nurses in many areas of professional development.

In recent years, this close relationship has extended to potential future oncology nurses: nursing students. Certified nurses are well-positioned to share their knowledge of oncology with the students they encounter, and as we know, oncology certified nurses are everywhere - includ-

ONCC	ONS
Validates competence in oncology nursing and related specialties by developing and administering certification programs	Community of oncology nurses; provides education and advocates for nurse and patient issues
More than 36,000 certified Registered Nurses	More than 39,000 members

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Certification in Academia

Lisa Bjorkelo, MSN, RN, CPON®, BMTCN®, CNE, CPN

Nurse educators have the opportunity to introduce the concept of specialty nursing certification to students in the respective nursing programs in which they teach. Often educators are the first to expose students to this aspect of nursing professional development. As a new educator, I wanted to explore how full time teaching impacts the ability to maintain a subspecialty certification. Prac-

tically speaking, the Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) designation is the obvious certification choice for nurses in academia. In December of 2005, the National League for Nursing offered the first Certified Nurse Educator exam. One hundred and seventy-four nurses passed this inaugural exam, enhancing the visibility and status of the academic nurse educator role as an advanced professional practice dis-

cipline. There are currently over four thousand Certified Nurse Educators in the United States. But what about the opportunity to maintain other specialty nursing certifications when one is teaching? Having recently transitioned to a faculty role at a local university, I turned to my colleagues for their insights on nursing certifications

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130 Employers Reduce Barriers to Certification Through ONCC FreeTake

Nurses from 130 institutions are facing fewer barriers to certification this year, thanks to their employers' participation in the ONCC FreeTake Program. This program enables nurses to apply for a test without payment, and provides one free retake if the nurse fails the test on the first attempt. The employer only pays the test fee if the nurse passes the test.

According to Marybeth Singer, MS, ANP-BC, AOCN®, President of the ONCC Board of Directors, "We know that paying the test fee up front is a

barrier to certification for many nurses – even if their employer reimburses them after they pass the test. We also know that fear of failure can discourage nurses from applying to test. The ONCC FreeTake program reduces these barriers to certification. And it encourages employers to be more supportive of nurse certification, because it's risk-free. Employers only pay the certification fee when the nurse passes the test."

The program requires employers to agree to provide at least 10 ONCC test

candidates in a 12-month period. Because this is the first year for the program, the 12-month period includes January 1-December 31, 2017. The 10 candidates can include applicants for any of ONCC's six certification examinations. That's helpful to institutions that may have nurses considering certification in oncology, breast care, or blood and marrow transplant nursing.

Interested in reducing the barriers to certification at your facility? Learn more about ONCC FreeTake at www.oncc.org/oncc-freetake-program.

Who is Staffing Their Facility with Certified Nurses?

Thirty-eight facilities recently received ONCC Employer Recognition Plaques, recognizing that the majority of their RNs are ONCC-certified.

- Amita Health Infusion Center in Hinsdale, IL
- Atlanticare Cancer Care Institute, Medical Oncology in Egg Harbor Township, NJ
- Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Vince Lombardi Clinic in Green Bay, WI
- Baptist Health Lexington, Cancer Care Center in Lexington, KY
- Baptist Health Lexington, Oncology Research, Lexington, KY
- Beverly Hospital, Lahey Health in Beverly, MA
- Chilton Medical Center, The Cancer Center in Pompton Plains, NJ
- Chippewa County Montevideo Hospital in Montevideo, MN
- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Milford Satellite in Milford, MA
- Deaconess Hospital, Outpatient Infusion in Evansville, IN
- Gundersen Health System, Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders in La Crosse, WI
- IU Health Bedford Hospital, Cancer Services in Bedford, IN

- Lahey Medical Center Peabody, Radiation Oncology in Peabody, MA
- Lehigh Valley Health Network LVPG Hematology Oncology in Allentown, PA
- Lehigh Valley Health Network, Infusion Services Bangor Heath Center in Pen Argyl, PA
- Lehigh Valley Health Network Medical Oncology MHC Multi-Purpose Satellite Infusion in Bethlehem, PA
- Los Angeles Cancer Network in Los Angeles, CA
- Memorial Hospital, MaryEllen Locher Breast Center in Chattanooga, TN
- Monmouth Medical Center, Oncology Day Stay in Long Branch, NJ
- New Hampshire Oncology-Hematology PA in, Hooksett, NH
- New York Presbyterian Hospital, Radiation Oncology in New York, NY
- Northwest Wisconsin Cancer Center in Ashland, WI
- Overlake Medical Center, Medical Oncology in Bellevue, WA
- Phelps County Regional Medical Center Delbert Day Cancer Institute, Infusion Center in Rolla, MO
- Sanford Oncology Services of Northern Minnesota in Bemidji, MN
- Simi Valley Hospital and the Nancy Reagan Breast Center, Nurse

- Navigators in Simi Valley, CA
- Siteman Cancer Center, St. Peters in St. Louis, MO
- Siteman Cancer Center, West County in St. Louis, MO
- Siteman Cancer Center, South County in St. Louis, MO
- Taylor Regional Hospital, The Cancer Center in Campbellsville, KY
- UCLA Medical Center – Santa Monica, 4SW Oncology in Santa Monica, CA
- Upstate Cancer Center, Adult Hematology/Oncology in Syracuse, NY
- VA Maine Health Care System, Oncology in Augusta, ME
- Virginia Hospital Center, Radiation Oncology in Arlington, VA
- WellStar West Georgia Medical Center, Ambulatory Infusion in LaGrange, GA
- West Suburban Center for Cancer Care in River Forest, IL
- Wheaton Franciscan Cancer Care in Brookfield, WI
- Wilson Cancer Resource Center in Beaumont, Troy, Sterling Heights, MI

Plaques are free-of-charge to patient care settings where more than 50% of the RNs are ONCC-certified. Go to <http://www.oncc.org/employer-recognition-plaque-order-form>.



Leadership Spotlight:

Board Member Lori Williams: Liaison to Certification News

Lynn Czaplewski, MS, RN, ACNS-BC, CRNI, AOCNS®

Lori Williams, PhD, APRN, OCN®, AOCN® joined the ONCC Board of Directors in May 2016. The Board is composed of volunteers who represent different bodies of certified nurses and the public. Lori is more than qualified to represent certified nurses as she has held the OCN® credential since 1986, when she passed the first OCN® exam ever administered. She went on to earn her AOCN® certification in 1996.

Members of the Board of Directors serve certified nurses by working to improve certification and the credentialing process to ensure a high quality product.

As part of their role, board members serve as liaisons to ONCC committees and task forces. Lori was appointed as liaison to the *ONCC Certification News* editorial board, where she shares new developments and changes initiated by the Board of Directors.

Lori has volunteered in various positions for ONCC and the Oncology Nurs-



ing Society (ONS) over the years and found her involvement rewarding. Some of her past roles include item writing for OCN® and AOCN® tests, test development committee chair; ONS Congress Team chair; Associate editor for *Oncology Nursing Forum*; grant review for the ONS Foundation; and ONS Board of Directors member. Initially Lori felt somewhat intimidated by the idea of volunteering at a national level. A friend encouraged her to get involved, and the rest is history. Today, she encourages nurses to get involved, and urges those who are already involved to encourage their colleagues to do the same. Besides volunteering with ONS and ONCC, Lori

is an Associate Professor of Symptom Research at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Her work benefits patients and clinicians alike by researching ways to identify and address patients' symptoms quicker, and developing instruments to help clinicians assess and manage symptoms. She stated she has fun at her job every day!

When asked what else she likes to do for fun she said she enjoys traveling with her husband, recently visiting Singapore, London and Stockholm where she was a speaker for healthcare professionals and patients. An upcoming trip to South America is planned. She has three grown children and five grandchildren with whom she enjoys spending time.

Lori emphasized how much she enjoys being a part of the ONCC board. We look forward to working with Lori and bringing you the latest news about certification.

ONS & ONCC: Working Together continued

ing clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, classrooms, communities, schools of nursing and many other settings. Certified nurses are connected with students in the workplace via clinical rotations, summer internships, and precepting opportunities. These occasions allow relationships to form, information to be shared, and mentorship opportunities to develop. The interest and lifelong learning that unfolds in the new nurse is a natural extension of the role. Certified nurses are role models. As 50% of certified nurses are also members of ONS, they are poised to share the benefits that professional membership can offer.

Examples of certified nurses engaging with nursing students abound. Certified nurses from the Southeast Minnesota ONS Chapter present to nursing students at local schools, promoting the benefits of professional membership and introducing the students to specialty certification. The New York City ONS Chapter hosts a 'Speed Dating' event where students rotate through 16 stations where they hear a 2-minute introduction to various nursing subspecialties. Almost all the nurse presenters are certified. Finally, ONS and ONCC exhibit at the National Student Nurses Association to increase recruitment into the spe-

cialty and introduce the concept of professional certification. ONS also offers complimentary membership to pre-licensure students enrolled in a nursing program. This benefit includes the opportunity for student members to take a Cancer Basics course at no charge.

Using resources and support from both ONS and ONCC, certified nurses can connect and interact with students in various settings and share their experience, passion for oncology and commitment to lifelong learning in order to engage the future of our profession. These students will be our colleagues and potentially our caregivers.

Certification in Academia continued

and for help in answering this question.

Many of my twenty-one colleagues stated that certification in your specific realm is important when teaching in relative courses. Certification helps to keep you current in the discipline and some stated that they felt it enhanced their credibility with students. Some of the specialties in which my colleagues are certified include pediatric nursing, inpatient obstetric nursing, holistic nursing, rehabilitation nursing, and critical care nursing. In addition, those who are working on a terminal degree or who do not have a terminal degree believe the CNE credential also increases their credibility with students and the university community.

Barriers to maintaining a specialty certification when teaching full time include carving out time for clinical practice to meet the clinical requirement hours, the expense of recertifying, the lack of financial incentive or compensation for staying specialty certified, and the lack of time to obtain necessary continuing education hours in the specialty. It is interesting that the barriers of expense, time and lack of incentive for being certified are the same barriers identified by newer staff nurses seeking initial certification or deciding to recertify. The difference however, is that these educators are experienced nurses with advance degrees who truly understand and appreciate the value of certification. They are experts in their field, who still may not meet the certification requirements as they exist. It is frustrating for some educators to have clinical groups on a unit in which the nurse is a specialist, yet not log enough hours of clinical care to recertify because of their concomitant academic obligations. Ironically, in some instances, these educators are test item writers for their specialty certification exam.



I asked my coworkers if they discuss specialty certification with their students in undergraduate and graduate programs. I am happy to report that those who teach junior and senior undergraduates and all graduate faculty always discuss certification in their classroom and clinical experiences. Similarly, those who teach the course “Professionalism in Nursing” also were more likely to discuss it. Some, but not all, who teach at the introductory level stated that they discuss certifications.

In my pediatric clinical rotation, I ask my students to research the specialty certifications available to pediatric nurses and then get the perspectives of the certified nurses on the clinical unit about the benefits and barriers to their certification. Additionally, all of our adjunct clinical instructors maintain a specialty certification. Most adjuncts are also working as clinical nurses and have the opportunity to log the required practice hours to maintain certifications. They can be effective role models for students by demonstrating their commitment to and advocacy for certifications. It is much harder for full time faculty to meet the practice hours

for some of the certifications and we are grateful to have our certified adjunct clinical faculty. Perhaps in the future there will be more options for nurse educators to maintain subspecialty certifications who can’t recertify via the traditional clinical care hours but are still experts in their fields.

A common theme my colleagues mentioned is that certification is an example of life-long learning. Our professional education is ongoing and getting certified is a concrete way of demonstrating and rewarding our educational efforts. This is the key concept which they stress in their classes. Certified educators believe we have a professional responsibility to show our students and mentees how certification will impact their growth and development as nurses. Indeed, educators are in an ideal position to advocate for certification given the various ways we interact with students: (classroom, skills labs, advising, and clinical practice) throughout their years in a nursing program. We have the unique opportunity to “get them young” and support certification as a natural progression to their professional growth.



Advocates Sign on to Spread the Word about Certification

Fifty two certified nurses have signed on as Certification Advocates in recent months, with a goal to encourage their colleagues to become certified. Advocates are certified nurse volunteers who promote the benefits of certification in their workplace, chapter or community.

Join ONCC in welcoming these participants to the program.

- Lori Allen, Colorado
- Areej Ali, Saudi Arabia
- Amal Alothmani, Saudi Arabia
- Elizabeth Alvino, New York
- Shelita Anderson, Texas
- Robin Atkins, Virginia
- Tashiana Bailey, Georgia
- Mary Barnhouse, Texas
- Angela Borkoski, Florida
- Florence Buenconsejo, Florida
- Kathleen Bumberry, Missouri
- Angela Butters, Wisconsin
- Jenna Campos Santos, Oregon
- Jacqueline Carson, Florida
- Norma Colwell-Rowello, New Jersey
- Irma Crawford, Arizona
- Cornelia Cremin-Melendez, New York
- Chris Donaghey, Indiana
- Seth Eisenberg, Washington
- Mary Ferrara, New York
- June Fleck, New York
- Rebekah Flynn, Missouri
- Robin Foley, California
- Norma Gano, Arizona

- Myra Granada, Texas
- Kelsey Haley, Texas
- Samantha Howorka, Ohio
- Cynthia Huff, California
- Victoria Klinger, North Carolina
- Colleen Lambert, Louisiana
- Kimberly Liberman, Indiana
- Lisa Manoloules, Massachusetts
- Jenna McQuade, North Carolina
- Carol Nielsen, California
- Matthew Ortiz, Idaho
- Ann Proctor, Pennsylvania
- Kate Richardson, South Carolina
- Melody Ristau, Oregon
- Janice Schwartz, New Mexico
- Kristin Sieja, Georgia
- Stacy Shourt, New York
- Daresha Solomon, Georgia
- Wanda Michelle Soniat, Louisiana
- Maxine Webster, Florida
- Tamara Webster, Michigan
- Angela Weyer, Ohio
- Tia Wheatley, California
- Jennifer Wieworka, Pennsylvania
- Annelle Williams, Texas
- Helina Williams, Virginia
- Brenda Wolles, South Dakota
- Amy Wood, Michigan

Currently there are more than 800 Certification Advocates. If you are interested in participating in the program, sign on at <http://www.oncc.org/promote-certification/advocate/nurse-advocates>.

ONCC Certified Nurses as of April 1, 2017

Credential	Number Certified
OCN®	29,941
CPHON®	1,990
AOCNP®	1,405
AOCNS®	431
CBCN®	900
BMTCN®	1,157
AOCN®	716
CPON®	985

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ONCC Mission Statement

The mission of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation is to promote health and safety by validating competence and ensuring life-long learning in oncology nursing and related specialties.

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Attending the ONS Annual Congress in Denver?

Visit the ONCC Certification Oasis in the Colorado Convention Center for certification information, fun giveaways and prize drawings. Open daily during most Congress hours.