ONCC FreeTake: A No-Risk Way to Support Certification

Employers who are looking to increase the number of certified oncology nurses on their staff have a new tool at their disposal - ONCC FreeTake. The ONCC FreeTake Program allows participating employers to only pay the test fee if the nurse passes the test. In addition, nurses who fail the test can retake the test for free one time within 12 months.

According to ONCC President, Marybeth Singer, MS, ANP-BC, AOCN®, “ONCC FreeTake removes two of the most common barriers to certification: the financial burden of paying the test fee up front, and fear of failure.” The program can also eliminate cumbersome accounting processes for employers who reimburse nurses individually after passing the test. Singer went on to say, “ONCC FreeTake helps employers support certification without the financial risks associated with test failure.”

Participating in the program is easy. Employers commit to providing at least 10 certification candidates in a 12-month period. The employer distributes special applications to eligible nurses, which allow them to apply without payment. If a nurse passes the test, the institution is invoiced for the test fee. If the nurse fails the test, she/he can retake the test one time within 12 months. If the nurse passes the test on the second attempt, the institution is charged the test fee. If the nurse fails on the second attempt, the institution is not charged for the test fee, and neither is the nurse.

The program includes all ONCC certification tests—OCN®, AOCNP®, AOCNS®, CBCN®, CPHON®, and BMTCN®—beginning with the 2017 tests. There is no maximum limit on the number of nurses who can test under the program.

Ask your institution to participate. Learn more at www.oncc.org/FreeTake.

Last AOCNS® Examination to be Given in 2017

ONCC will stop offering the Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist (AOCNS®) Examination at the end of 2017. The last day an AOCNS® Examination can be taken is December 31, 2017.

According to ONCC President, Marybeth Singer, MS, ANP-BC, AOCN®, “We regret that we cannot continue to offer the AOCNS® Examination. The very low number of AOCNS® examination candidates over the past several years has made it difficult to maintain the program.”

During the twelve years that the AOCNS® Examination has been administered, only 429 nurses have earned the credential. In 2015, only 35 initial candidates took the AOCNS® Examination, and fewer than that have applied to take the test in 2016. This is an insufficient number to calculate the statistics required to maintain a psychometrically sound examination. ONCC is committed to providing high quality certification programs, and cannot continue to maintain those quality standards on a low volume program.

In addition, the low number of candidates results in an ongoing financial deficit when revenue does not meet program expenses year after year.

Nurses who are currently AOCNS® certified, or who become AOCNS® certified by the end of 2017 will be able to renew the credential by earning professional development points. Testing will not be an option for renewal after December 31, 2017.
Editor’s Message: 30 Years Young!
Erica Fischer-Cartlidge, MSN, RN, CBCN®, AOCNS®

Being a Millennial (someone born between 1980-2000) is often perceived to have negative connotations and can lead to one being underestimated. As a Millennial myself, I often hear comments of shock or surprise when I share something I’ve achieved, because I’m “still a baby” or have been labeled an ‘overachiever’ for wanting to be more involved or take another step in my career. There are the other standard generational stereotypes that arise as well.

What is frequently forgotten about the Millennial generation is that like members of generations before it, there were tragedies which shaped their development: Columbine High School massacre, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and Hurricane Katrina among them. From these events came a generation who is globally connected, welcomes diversity with open arms, and is fiercely committed to doing work that has value. Millennials are resilient in the face of change and leading us into the future.

What does this have to do with certification? With the celebration of its 30th year in 2016, ONCC is a member of the Millennial generation! Having been incorporated in 1984 and then offering the first certification test on April 30, 1986, the organization is the embodiment of a Millennial—interested in networking, connected via social media and dedicated to working for cause. This is evident in more ways than I can describe, but what is a milestone birthday without a little reminiscing?

In the years since the first test, tens of thousands of nurses have earned certification and more than 37,000 nurses currently maintain it with one or more of the eight credentials; more than 1,500 certification scholarships (Roberta Scofield Certification Awards) have been awarded; and an innovative way to validate continuing competence was born with the

continued on page 8

Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center is 2016 Employer Award Winner
Lisa Bjorkelo, MSN, RN, CPON®, BMTCN®, CNE

ONCC has been recognizing employers who support oncology nursing certification since 1999. This year, Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center received the Employer Recognition Award for their support and recognition of nurses in all phases of the certification process. The institution, located in Connecticut, was nominated by Camille Servodidio RN, MPH, OCN®, CBCN®, CCRP and Gean Brown MSN, RN, OCN®.

The center’s job descriptions indicate oncology nurse certification is preferred. Nursing department expectations are that nurses will complete certification within two years of hire, or as soon as the nurse is eligible to take the test. To that end, the organization provides generous financial support for exam preparation, testing, and renewal. A designated endowment fund reimburses nurses for review courses, study materials, online education, as well as for examination and certification renewal fees. Cancer program nurses have the opportunity to attend ONS Congress or take certification prep courses with full reimbursement. Nurses who certify for the first time receive an incentive bonus upon passing the test. The financial assistance is offered to full, part time and per diem nurses.

ONCC President Marybeth Singer and Camille Servodidio of Middlesex Hospital.

Once certified, Middlesex celebrates their nurses’ achievements in many ways. On their annual performance evaluation, certified nurses re-
Clara Beaver: Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year
Lynn Czaplewski, MS, RN, ACNS-BC, CRNI, AOCNS®

“Strong nursing and patient advocate,” “clinical expert,” and “generous mentor” are a few of the accolades from the peers of Clara Beaver, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC, AOCNS®. These words only begin to describe Clara’s attributes and her role in improving oncology nursing care.

Clara has worked for the Karmanos Cancer Center, an NCI-Designated Cancer Center in Detroit, Michigan for ten years. She is a clinical nurse specialist and Manager of Ambulatory Operations at the Wertz Infusion Center. Her role extends to 13 community sites as well, where she is considered the “chemotherapy expert.” One of her recent achievements was the development of a competency validation process to ensure standardization of chemotherapy nursing practice. She stated that nurses may “drift” from policies over time and this process helps direct them back to best practice. This great work was presented as an ePoster at the ONS Congress, describing how competency validation of 150 nurses was completed in real time – no small accomplishment!

Clara’s commitment to certification is evident in the ways she promotes certification and how she serves as a mentor for nurses working toward certification. She played a significant role in increasing certification rates in the ambulatory care department from 17% to 30% in one year. She has also served as a content writer for ONCC certification tests.

Contributing to oncology nursing as a whole, she has presented many posters at ONS Congresses, and published manuscripts on fatigue and chemotherapy exposure in the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*.

Clara feels that nursing, especially oncology nursing, is a calling. Her grandmother was an obstetrics nurse who first planted the seed of nursing as a career. After her grandfather was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, she taught herself all she could about cancer. A hospice nurse who cared for her grandfather before he died impressed Clara so much that she decided in her first year of college that she wanted to be an oncology nurse. Clara’s colleague Morris A. Magnan, PhD, RN, wrote “Her strongest attribute is her ability to advocate for safe compassionate care for oncology patients and to encourage this behavior in others.” And that is why she is a very deserving recipient of the 2016 Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year Award!

Thank you, Clara, for all of your dedication and work.

Middlesex Hospital continued

...receive an “exceeds expectations” rating in the core value of “pursuing excellence” or in the category of “clinical expertise”, which translates into higher merit increases. They also have the opportunity to participate in the hospital’s clinical advancement program designated by the acronym ATTAIN (Acknowledging The Talents, Accomplishments and Involvement of Nurses). Nurses are recognized in the hospital newsletter and on their awards and recognition website. Additionally, newly certified nurses are announced during department staff meetings and acknowledged on individual units with small celebrations. Special recognition is bestowed on Certified Nurses Day with thank you cards, gift cards and letters of appreciation from managers and senior administration. Last year on Certified Nurses Day the Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Operations personally presented these tokens of appreciation to certified nurses on staff.

Mentoring and role modeling is important in this organization and the majority of hospital-wide nurse leaders are certified. The hospital has a professional development council and an endowment subcommittee which supports, informs and mentors nurses regarding certification.

Congratulations to the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center on this award.
“Blown away! Flabbergasted! Totally shocked!” is how Jean Wolf, RN, MSN, OCN® describes the emotion she felt when the call came congratulating her on being selected 2016 OCN® of the Year.

Nominated by a peer and recommended by colleagues, Jean, an Assistant Director of Nursing for inpatient oncology at Cone Health in Greensboro, North Carolina was “completely touched and honored” when she took the stage to accept her award at the ONCC Recognition Breakfast for Oncology Certified Nurses in San Antonio, Texas.

Jean has committed 35 years to the specialty. Her colleagues speak emphatically of her devotion to the patients she serves and the staff she mentors. She applies a personal touch to all she does. One example was when she created a list of nurses in her department she felt were ready to take the next logical step in their careers—certification. Those nurses were each mailed a letter, acknowledging their readiness and encouraging certification, signed by the leadership team. She individually met with each nurse to personally encourage them, so they would feel confident that others saw their strengths, too. She remembered the time when “a CNS encouraged me” and how that started the process for her.

Monica Martin, a staff nurse at Wesley Long Hospital in the Cone Health system described how Jean utilized the Shared Governance Committee and designed a bulletin board titled: “Are you Certifiable?” It was complete with certification information and testimonials from certified nurses. She didn’t stop there. She paired a certified nurse mentor with a non-certified nurse for test preparation. The result? An amazing 38% of staff became certified! Jean makes sure the successful nurse is recognized by displaying a congratulatory banner and adding their name to a certification plaque in their workplace.

Jean is a strong advocate for certification and finds that “…patients notice. They see ‘Certified RN’ on my name badge and remark, ‘that’s different’. It opens the conversation for me to share what certification means for them.” Jean’s colleagues comment: “She has the ability to energize and motivate,” “her mentoring and coach-

Tips for Mastering Your ILNA Renewal

Nicoloe Krist, MSN, CNS, AOCNS®, BMTCN®, OCN®

The Individual Learning Needs Assessment (ILNA) has replaced ONC-PRO as the primary method for certification renewal. This cornerstone of this assessment-based method is to identify strengths and weaknesses in your current knowledge. Regardless of when your certification is due for renewal, it is never too early to start thinking about it. Nothing is worse than waiting until the last moment to complete professional development activities—whether they be continuing nursing education, continuing medical education, academic education, publications or presentations—which are all acceptable for ILNA points.

Nurses often ask how to identify the category where a professional development activity fits on their learning plan. Regardless of the certification you are renewing, start with the Test Content Outline (Test Blueprint). This outline contains sub-content areas that can help you determine where a program fits. Read the activity’s description and learning objectives and look for those words on the Content Outline to help determine where to apply the points. ONCC also provides keywords to help you identify the category where a CE activity best fits. Keywords are available on ONCC’s Resource Center (www.oncc.org/ILNA) and on your learning plan in LearningBuilder. On LearningBuilder, click the shield icon in the header for each subject area.

You can use the same points for different certifications. For example, an
Laura Vogeli, MSN, RN, OCN®, CBCN® is a core pillar at the Carol Baldwin Breast Care Center at Stony Brook Cancer Center in Stony Brook, New York. Her contributions and dedication to breast cancer patients and the nurses who care for them are innumerable.

Laura has been an oncology nurse for nearly 30 years. She became OCN® certified in 2006 and obtained CBCN® certification in 2009 when it first became available.

For the last four years Laura has worked as a nurse navigator, to ensure breast cancer patients are supported throughout their journey. In her role she is one of the first contacts for newly diagnosed patients at Stony Brook. She helps them sort through the fear and anxiety of entering the cancer journey and accept a participatory role in their plan of care.

Her dedication to improving the patient experience lead her to work on the “Fast 5 Program,” a multidisciplinary initiative that expedites the care of patients with a BIRAD-5 abnormality on mammogram. This program enables patients to have a biopsy performed, reviewed, and an appointment scheduled with a breast surgeon or medical oncologist within 5 business days or less. She presented her work at the American College of Breast Surgeons and later won the prestigious Pura Pantojas Award for Nursing Excellence.

Aiming to foster a healthier work environment for her colleagues, Laura was part of a group that secured a Live Strong Foundation grant to develop the Vital Hearts-Secondary Trauma Resilience Training. This program taught self-care techniques to help overcome compassion fatigue and burnout.

As a result of her passion for oncology nursing and certification, five nurses became CBCN® certified after attending the review course that Laura coordinated at the breast center.

Outside of work, Laura volunteers for the Stony Brook Medicine’s annual National Cancer Survivor’s Day Celebration and the “Walk for Beauty” that raises funds for breast cancer research. Additionally, she is a volunteer instructor for the cancer center’s “Chemotherapy Orientation” classes, which focus on symptom management strategies for patients about to begin cancer treatment.

Congratulations to Laura Vogeli!

Mastering ILNA Renewal Points continued

activity on post-transplant pain could apply to post-transplant care on your BMTCN® learning plan, and to symptom management on your OCN® learning plan. Many nurses participate in activities they do not realize qualify for renewal points, such as poster presentations or academic education. The ONCC Resource Center lists the number of points you can receive for various activities.

Remember, when you pass the test your test score report determines your ILNA learning needs for your first renewal. For subsequent renewals, you must take the assessment before you start completing your professional development activities*. Points earned before you take your assessment will not count for renewal.

Once you complete your assessment, record your points on your learning plan in LearningBuilder (log in at www.oncc.org/Access-My-Account). When you’re due to renew, remember the earlier you submit your renewal application and learning plan, the more time you will have if there are any questions about the points you submitted.

Good luck on renewing your certification and remember to start early.

*Editor’s note: AOCN® and CPON® candidates do not take the learning needs assessment.

Certified Nurses as of October 3, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credential</th>
<th>Number Certified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OCN®</td>
<td>30,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPHON®</td>
<td>1,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOCNP®</td>
<td>1,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOCNS®</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBCN®</td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMTCN®</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOCN®</td>
<td>786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPON®</td>
<td>1,071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Smiling Face of First BMTCN® of the Year Reassures Patients
Nicoloe Krist, MSN, CNS, AOCNS®, BMTCN®, OCN®

Caroline Costello, MBA, BSN, RN, CPON®, BMTCN® is the Nursing Education Coordinator for the Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant Unit at Boston Children’s Hospital. She is also the first recipient of the Blood & Marrow Transplant Certified Nurse (BMTCN®) of the Year Award.

Caroline has been working with BMT patients for 24 years. Coming from a family of nurses (including her mother, two aunts and an uncle), she knew from a very young age she wanted to become a nurse. She realized that she wanted to work with children when she saw a magazine ad with a picture of a child getting a shot. She wanted to be the one who would make that child smile afterwards. She achieved her pediatric oncology certification several years ago, but felt her BMT experience was not adequately recognized by CPON® certification alone. That led her to become the first nurse at her hospital to obtain the BMTCN® credential in February 2014.

It takes a special person to work with pediatric oncology patients and families, especially those undergoing a SCT. Caroline fits this role. She is usually the first staff member patients and families meet when they come to the SCT unit. She has created an intake process where she gives them a tour of the unit, describes what to expect while undergoing a transplant and answers their questions. Caroline created an intake tool to gather information about the patient to share with the staff, which helps them prepare to meet individual needs before admission. Always seeking more ways to comfort patients, Caroline has become a Reiki Master and is working on a study to assess Reiki’s effects on symptom management in the pediatric SCT patient.

continued on page 8

Colorado’s Tony Yost Named CPHON® of the Year

After making the leap to certification himself, Tony Yost, BSN, RN, CPHON® of Children’s Hospital Colorado made it his mission to improve the care of children with cancer in every way possible. Those efforts earned him recognition as the 2016 CPHON® of the Year.

In 2015, Tony helped develop the “Make the Leap to Certification” campaign which touches more than 150 inpatient and outpatient nurses at three care delivery sites. The program incorporates a mentoring component, study buddies, review classes, a comprehensive catalog of certification-related resources, ongoing email communication and encouragement. It culminates with new and increased employer recognition for certified nurses. The organization has a goal to increase the number of certified nurses by at least 10% each year.

At his institution, he is the lead for the inpatient Central Line Blood Stream Infection (CLABSI) committee, and has implemented care bundles that resulted in a 50% reduction in infections. He has created innovative education strategies known as Competency on the Fly that bring new equipment education, practice changes, and policy updates to staff in their working environment in real time. He also started a 1-2-3 initiative on his unit (one bath/linen change, at least two oral cares, ambulating three times – each day). The initiative has since spread throughout the organization.

In addition to serving as an Advocate for certification, Tony volunteers for a number of pediatric oncology-related causes, including awareness events, continued on page 8
30 Years of Commitment: Oncology Nurses Continuously Certified Since 1986

Congratulations to these oncology nurses who have maintained continuous certification since passing the first oncology nursing certification examination in 1986 and earning the OCN® credential.

Terri B. Ades AOCN®
Linda Ankeny OCN®
Kathleen Beltinck OCN®
Nanette L. Bergamo OCN®
Donna Berry AOCN®
Lisa Bielinski AOCN®
Nona Blauvelt AOCN®
Maryanne Bletscher AOCN®
Janine Blocher OCN®
Marla Bolen OCN®
Debra A. Bowen OCN®
Rita Sam B. Boyd OCN®
Kim E. Brodie AOCN®
Cheryl L. Brohard AOCN®
Mary Brooks OCN®
Jewel I. Brown OCN®
Eileen Brown OCN®
Nancy Jo Bush AOCN®
Jeanne Christie OCN®
Jane C. Clark OCN®, AOCN®
Judy Costas OCN®
Melissa Craft AOCN®
Mary A. Cullina AOCN®, AOCNS®
Catherine J. Davis OCN®
Karen J. DeVries OCN®, CBCN®
Julia A. Eggert AOCN®
Nancy Ehmke AOCN®
Jane Murray Fall-Dickson AOCN®
Julia E. Fanslow AOCN®
Susan Faulkner OCN®
Rosemary Field AOCNS®
Jill Fiscus OCN®
Kathy M. Fleming Young OCN®
Eileen M. Flynn OCN®
Marilyn Annette Forgey OCN®
Julianne Fritz OCN®
Vivian Gaits AOCN®
Mary Gerbracht AOCN®
Catherine Glennon OCN®
Marjorie Good OCN®
Jacquelyn E. Grandt AOCN®
Peggy M. Gray AOCNS®
Juliann Griffie AOCN®
Connie G. Gunter-Miller OCN®
Susan J. Halbritter OCN®
Jeanne M. Harkness AOCNS®, CBCN®
Nancy A. Hayes AOCN®
Carma S. Herring OCN®
Maureen H. Hobgood OCN®
Janice D. Hoss OCN®
Aida D. Jones AOCN®
Patricia L. Kealiher OCN®
Lynette S. Kemp AOCN®
Selma J. Kendrick OCN®, BMTCN®
Alice S. Kerber AOCN®
Marsha A. Ketcham OCN®
Joan K. Kitson-Hart OCN®
Nancy Klatt AOCN®
Carol Kotsubo CPON®
Gwendolyn Koval OCN®
Cheri L. Krauss OCN®
Linda U. Krebs AOCN®
Donna Krickl AOCN®
Maureen Larkin OCN®
Jan M. Lovett OCN®
Virginia C. Manss AOCN®
Cynthia Walls Martin AOCNP®
Lois Means OCN®
Carmencita C. Mercado-Poe OCN®
Christina J. Meyers OCN®
Karen A. Moore OCN®
Patricia A. Morris OCN®
Christine Munshower OCN®, BMTCN®
Jamie Myers AOCN®, AOCNS®
Frances L. Necci OCN®, AOCNP®
Marylou Nesbitt AOCN®
Joyce Lynn Neumann AOCN®, BMTCN®
Beverly Nicholson AOCN®
Christine C. Nicks AOCN®
Anita Nirenberg AOCNP®
Patricia Jane Nockels OCN®
Diane E. Oakley OCN®
Patricia Palmer AOCNS®
Patricia N. Paquette OCN®
Bonnie L. Pesacov AOCN®, CBCN®
Judith Petersen AOCN®
Carolyann N. Peterson AOCN®
Patricia A. Poirier AOCN®
Anne Poliquin OCN®
Mary Beth Reardon OCN®
Paula Reed OCN®
Barbara B. Rogers AOCN®
Pamela Y. Russell OCN®
Sandra Lee Schafer AOCN®
Susan Scott AOCN®
Beverly Shields-Todd OCN®
Judy Sisk OCN®
Miriam E. Steven OCN®
Sherry Lynn Sorensen OCN®
Patricia A. Spencer-Cisek AOCNP®
Elyse Sporkin OCN®
Annette Stacy AOCN®
Laura Suchanek AOCN®
Karen K. Swenson AOCN®
Janice A. Terlizzi AOCN®
Ellen M. Toth OCN®
Amy S. Tranin AOCN®
Vicki O. Tuchman AOCNS®
Rosemary A. Tucker OCN®
Nancy L. Vaught OCN®
Therese Vega-Stromberg AOCN®
Rose M. Virani OCN®
Deborah Volker AOCN®
Carol A. Wells AOCN®
Lori A. Williams OCN®, AOCN®
Barbara J. Wilson OCN®, AOCN®
Ellen M. Woods OCN®

Thank you for your 30-year commitment to oncology nursing certification and to oncology patient care.
Caroline Costello continued

While SCT has advanced leaps and bounds in recent decades, advances continue to be made and it is essential to have strong nurses in this field. Caroline encourages nurses to become certified and has developed a continuing education curriculum that supports BMTCN® certification. She also educates nurses in other areas of the hospital to better serve pediatric SCT patients, and has helped international institutions by hosting SCT nurses from Singapore, Korea, and Mexico.

When I asked Caroline what she felt is her greatest achievement as nurse she took pause and considered her 30 year career. She said being an example for others, and working and sharing information with new nurses. However, several days later she contacted me again saying that after thinking about it, she would say her proudest achievement is seeing someone go home after transplant. Caroline said that helping a patient successfully go through such a tough therapy and then come back to see the staff is very rewarding. She is inspired by her patients and feels it is a privilege to see them go on to lead successful lives. Even just getting to know Caroline it was clear to see that these achievements in patient care are likely related to her originally stated accomplishment: leading by example and growing a competent, caring team on the unit.

Caroline works with a challenging patient population who need to see a smiling, reassuring face when they step onto the floor. Congratulations Caroline, the inaugural recipient of the BMTCN® of the Year Award.

30 Years Young continued

launch of the Individual Learning Needs Assessment (ILNA). ONCC’s collaboration with the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) remains strong, as seen by the development of the ONS/ONCC Chemotherapy Biotherapy Certificate Program and other initiatives.

ONCC’s passion to promote excellence in patient care extends to the entire oncology nursing community by involving nurses in role delineation studies, task forces and board positions in the organization. ONCC has remained committed to staying connected to certified nurses and promoting certification through their presence on social media channels Facebook and Twitter, and by partnering with multiple certifying bodies to launch the national campaign ‘Certified Nurses Are Everywhere.’

Entering its third decade, ONCC is proof that amazing things can happen even when you’re only 30 years young.

Tony Yost continued

research fundraising, camps for patients and siblings, and health policy initiatives. He recently provided care for 24 pediatric oncology patients during their once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Colorado Rockies spring training camp.

Tony’s colleague, Deb Friedman, BSN, RN, CPHON® said Tony “is clearly called to this work and gives his heart and soul to the patients and families.” His passion for certification, education, and evidence-based practice suggests he gives to his colleagues as well. Congratulations, Tony!

Jean Wolf continued

ing has inspired nurses,” “she provides strong and positive role modeling,” “an exemplary attitude,” and she is “often sought out for information or advice.”

Even in a first encounter, it’s notable that Jean Wolf is enthusiastic in her commitment to certification, and to motivating, encouraging, and supporting others who are beginning the process as she exclaims, “It’s time! Let’s do it! We’ll help you!”

And she does.