

Why is Certification Important to Employers?

Certification is the objective, measurable way to ensure a professional nurse has the knowledge to practice competently within the specialty of oncology nursing. Certification in oncology nursing demonstrates a nurse has both specialized knowledge and experience in cancer care.

What can certified nurses offer to you?

- **Knowledge**—Certified nurses have tested knowledge beyond entry-level care.
- **Experience**—Certified nurses have met rigorous requirements for experience in the specialty.
- **Confidence**—Certified nurses provide employers with a level of confidence beyond an RN license.

ONCC offers seven certifications in oncology nursing:

- **OCN**[®]—Oncology Certified Nurse. Basic level certification focusing on adult care.
- **CPHON**[®]—Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse. Basic level certification in pediatric oncology/hematology.
- **AOCNP**[®]—Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner. Role-specific advanced certification for nurse practitioners in adult oncology.
- **AOCNS**[®]—Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist. Advanced certification for nurses practicing in a role of the clinical nurse specialist in adult oncology.
- **CBCN**[®]—Certified Breast Care Nurse. Specialty certification in breast care nursing.
- **AOCN**[®]—Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse. Advanced level certification focusing on adult oncology (available for renewal only).
- **CPON**[®]—Certified Pediatric Oncology Nurse. Basic certification in pediatric oncology (available for renewal only).

An Investment that Benefits Your Staff and Your Patients

Certification of nursing staff is an investment in your staff's professional development, in your facility's commitment to providing quality care, and in your public image.

Supporting certification in oncology nursing can help you:

- **Recruit qualified nurses**—Financial support for certification is a valued benefit for nurses, one that is especially attractive in a competitive market.
- **Retain experienced nurses**—Research indicates certified nurses report higher levels of job satisfaction.
- **Meet a growing demand for cancer care**—New challenges are being created by an aging population that is at greater risk for cancer.
- **Respond to public preferences**—Public surveys show people prefer facilities with a higher percentage of certified nurses.
- **Meet accreditation standards**—Certification factors into accreditation or recognition granted by agencies such as the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, or distinction by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Magnet Recognition Program[™]. Certification is also recognized in standards set by organizations such as the Association of Community Cancer Centers, and the American College of Radiation Oncology.



How to Encourage Certification of Your Staff

Opportunities exist for employers of all sizes to encourage their nursing staff to become certified. Encouragement can be offered in a variety of forms, both financial and non-financial.

Financial support of certification can include:

- Reimburse nurses for test fees and expenses.
- Provide paid time off to take the test.
- Pay for review courses.
- Host on-site review courses.
- Provide paid time off for review courses.
- Purchase test preparation/reference materials.

Other ways to encourage certification include:

- Distribute information about oncology nursing certification and test opportunities to staff. (*Free information is available from ONCC.*)
- Create posters or bulletin boards featuring information about certification.
- Recruit an advocate within your institution to actively promote the benefits of certification.
- Host staff in-service programs about the benefits of certification.
- Incorporate certification into the career ladder, and require certification for advancement to selected positions.
- Organize certification test study groups or create study partners.
- Publish stories about certified nurses in your institution's newsletter.
- Post links to the ONCC Web site (www.oncc.org) on your organization's Web site.
- Send email notices to nurses about review courses, test application deadlines, and your institution's benefits related to certification.
- Give preference to certified nurses to attend continuing education conferences.



Recognize Certified Nurses at Your Facility

Attaining certification requires time and effort on the part of the individual nurse. Maintaining that certification demonstrates an ongoing commitment to professional development and patient care. Recognizing staff for their efforts can boost morale and enhance job satisfaction.

There are many opportunities to recognize certified nurses financially, personally, and publicly, such as:

- Give a monetary bonus to nurses who attain or renew certification.
- Provide a pay increase for certified nurses.
- Offer shift or schedule preferences for certified nurses.
- Present certified nurses with a credential pin.
- Add credentials to certified nurses' name badges.
- Send a congratulatory letter from the CEO to each certified nurse.
- Publish the names and photos of certified nurses in your newsletter.
- Frame certified nurses' certificates and photos, and display them on the unit.
- Display the names of certified nurses on a plaque in the unit. (*ONCC offers a free recognition plaque to patient care settings where a majority of nurses are oncology certified.*)
- Host a luncheon, dinner, or other social event to honor certified nurses.
- Send press releases to local newspapers about staff who attain or renew certification.
- Nominate an oncology certified nurse for one of ONCC's certified nurse of the year awards.
- Provide opportunities for certified nurses to participate in teaching or precepting activities.



About the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation

The Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) is a non-profit organization that was incorporated in 1984. The mission of ONCC is to promote excellence in patient care and professional practice by validating specialized knowledge in oncology nursing and related specialties. All ONCC certification programs are nationally accredited.



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Employer Support for Certification



Enhancing **Patient Care**,
Professional Staff,
and **Your Image**



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