ONCC Pilot Testing Employer Discounts

Although many employers recognize the benefits of having certified nursing staff on their team, not all understand the impact that employer support can have on individual nurses. Reimbursing nurses who pass a certification test is a much-appreciated first step, but savvy employers realize doing more to support and recognize certified nurses can go a long way toward helping nurses overcome the barriers to certification.

ONCC wants to encourage employers of all sizes to take a broader view of certification support, and is pilot-testing an Employer Discount Program in 2015. Through the program, employers will earn points for the ways in which they encourage, support or recognize certification of oncology nurses. The points will translate into discounts on certification fees. The more an employer does to encourage, support, or recognize certification of oncology nurses, the greater the discount that can be earned.

For example, providing nurses with onsite programs to prepare for certification or certification renewal, offering paid time off to take a test, linking certification to the career ladder, and educating patients on the value of certified nurses are just a few of the ways employers can earn points.

Employers must meet minimum levels of support to participate in the program; the discount incentives are intended to encourage and reward them for doing more. For example, employers must agree to pay for certification at the time the candidate applies, rather than as a reimbursement. According to Cyndi Miller Murphy, ONCC Executive Director, “Candidates have told us they’re hesitant to pay the certification fee themselves. The concept of being reimbursed upon passing can make some candidates more anxious about testing, or worry about losing money. When employers pay for certification in advance, it removes another barrier for the individual nurse.”

In addition, employers who meet specific benchmarks for candidate volume will receive extra discounts. This two-prong approach enables employers of all sizes to participate.

Murphy said ONCC will pilot test the program in 2015 with a small group of employers of different sizes. If all goes well, the program will be offered to more employers in 2016.

Meet 2014 CPON® of the Year: Joyce Wong

Joyce Wong, RN, CPON®, CHTP, LMT recently received the 2014 Certified Pediatric Oncology Nurse (CPON®) of the Year award. Joyce has been a nurse for 45 years, devoting the last 27 years of her career to providing high quality, compassionate care to pediatric oncology patients and their families. Joyce has been certified in pediatric oncology nursing for the past 17 years and in her current role, Integrative Services Coordinator, provides complementary medicine at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children in Honolulu, Hawaii. Joyce was able to clearly articulate the need for her current position, which focuses on solidifying the Healing Touch/Reiki program of volunteers and to offer aromatherapy, meditation, affirmations, and vision boards for patients, along with the establishment of policies and procedures to offer the modalities of acupuncture, massage, yoga, and “Healing through Art” to patients.

Joyce is an extraordinary advocate for certification - personally holding five certi-
During my PhD studies, one of my required courses was leadership and health policy. Our required readings included *The Leadership Challenge* by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner. This book is one that has influenced my personal views of leadership as well as my own leadership development. The first chapter of this book begins with a discussion of five practices of exemplary leadership. Although we often think of leadership in terms of individuals, organizations can be leaders as well. During my years of service on the ONCC board of directors, I have been deeply impressed by ONCC’s role as an exemplary leader in promoting excellence in patient care and professional practice through certification. Among the attributes of exemplary leadership is that of enabling others to act. This includes making it possible for people to do good work. This good work then translates into a sense of engagement and commitment which further leads to extraordinary outcomes.

In 2015, ONCC is enabling nurses to take action to demonstrate their specialty knowledge by increasing access to all of its certification exams by offering year-round testing. ONCC has offered year-round testing for its advanced exams for several years. Year-round testing will now be available to any eligible nurse who wishes to pursue certification.

Among the benefits of year-round testing is that the waiting time between applying for a test and actually taking the test will be reduced for most nurses. This allows for certified nurses to be at patients’ besides sooner.

Year-round testing also offers greater flexibility for nurses in their efforts to prepare for the test. Nurses will be able to individualize their preparation efforts to better meet their personal schedules which may encourage more nurses to pursue certification.

ONCC’s credential-specific Test Candidate Handbooks are now available at www.oncc.org. Registration for the 2015 tests is open, and testing will be available through December 31, 2015. At the time an eligible nurse applies for a test, he or she will be given a 90-day window for scheduling and taking the test. If a nurse’s plans change during the assigned window, he or she may request to delay testing, however, he or she must still meet eligibility requirements. Nurses who wish to test in late 2015 must apply by September 1, 2015. This will ensure that they have a full 90-day testing period. Nurses who apply after September 1, 2015, and wish to test in 2015 may not be accommodated, or may have a shorter period for taking the test and fewer options for actual test dates and testing locations. ONCC will continue to offer testing at a limited number of international sites outside of North America. These tests will be offered in November, and candidates will be required to apply by August 5.

I would like to conclude this column with a word of deep appreciation to all of the volunteer leaders whose work supports the mission and vision of ONCC. I recently attended the Association of Pediatric Health System Nurses conference in San Antonio, Texas. I am extremely impressed with the commitment and passion these nurses have for their patients. While I was in San Antonio, I attended a session led by Barry Posner, the author of *The Leadership Challenge*. The session was titled “Enabling Nurses” and was focused on creating an environment in which nurses are enabled to pursue their professional goals. During this session, Dr. Posner encouraged nurses to think of leadership in terms of individuals, organizations, and systems. He also emphasized the importance of creating a culture of trust and respect in order to enable nurses to pursue their goals.

### When Should You Apply to Test? An Action Plan When No Deadline is in Sight

A few months ago ONCC announced it eliminated application deadline dates for most 2015 certification tests. The most obvious benefit to this change is the time between application and testing is dramatically reduced. In most instances, you will be able to schedule a test appointment within just a few weeks of submitting an application, and have a personal 90-day period in which to take the test.

The good news: you can get certified faster. The bad news? If you’re deadline driven, you may not be prompted to take action. But, regardless of whether you have a “get it done now!” personality or procrastination is your middle name, there are strategies to help.

**Apply when you are ready to test.** If you are ready to test when you apply, you will be prepared to immediately schedule a test appointment at a location and time that meets your needs — whether that time is at the beginning or the end of your 90-day testing period. Either way, you’ll have more options if you’re ready to go.

**Create a personal deadline date.** For many of us, deadlines prompt action. If that’s you, create your own application deadline date. New Year’s Day, the first day of spring, July 4 — any date that has meaning to you can become your deadline date. Imagine the sense of accomplishment when you can cross “apply for certification” off your to-do list.

**Act before it’s too late.** There are final application deadline dates that apply to some candidates. You must apply by September 1 if you plan to test in 2015. This will ensure you have a full 90-day testing period before the year ends. If you plan to test outside the US or Canada, you must apply even earlier, by August 5 (note that international testing will be offered only in November 2015).

2015 will bring more options to take a certification test on your timetable. Learn more about testing at www.oncc.org.
Meet the Candidates on the Ballot for ONCC Board

Two candidates are on the ballot for the ONCC Board of Directors Election. This position is open only to nurses who are CPON® or CPHON® certified. Each candidate was asked to describe how she would fulfill the mission of ONCC, which is to promote excellence in patient care and professional practice by validating specialized knowledge in oncology nursing and related specialties. Their responses are below. Voting ends March 25, 2015. Check your email for a link to your personalized ballot.

Rita Secola, PhD, RN, CPON®, FAAN
Patient Care Services Director
Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA)
Los Angeles, CA

Response to ONCC Mission Statement:
As a leader at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) for Patient Care Services and Magnet designated Hospital, my ongoing work is targeted at clinical operations, education and research to promote and advance knowledge for pediatric hematology oncology patient care providers. It is an expectation and ongoing encouragement by myself and service line managers to support CPHON® and BMTCN™ certification for all nursing staff. At CHLA, there is also a clinical pay differential for certification. We review the importance of certification with each APHON chemotherapy biotherapy course attendee, in hematology oncology orientation didactics, and in RN quarterly meetings. As an institution we not only encourage certification as a gold standard of nursing excellence, we also provide reimbursement for exam costs. One of my clinical managers is also assigned to work with the CPHON® writing group in ONCC and she as well is a strong advocate for oncology certification. Additionally, I have ordered many current APHON core curriculum books to be available to the staff in order to prepare for certification exam.

Melody Watral, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, CPON®
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Instructor
University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Department of Neurosurgery Cary, NC

Response to ONCC Mission Statement:
Since sitting for the first CPON® exam — and passing the exam — all those many years ago, I have remained extremely proud of my CPON® credential. I’ve had numerous patients and their family members ask me what CPON® stands for and they are always impressed when I explain the certification process to them. I have actively served as a certification advocate in my workplace and have encouraged and mentored colleagues towards attaining certification.

While serving on the APHON Board, I had the opportunity to serve as their ONCC Board liaison. This was an incredible opportunity and I feel well versed in the ONCC process. In serving on the ONCC Board in an elected capacity, my intention would be to continue promoting certification for Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses by speaking with nurses and their managers in both my workplace and in other institutions regarding the importance and significance of ONCC certification to our professional practice. Our patients and families deserve high quality care—ONCC certification is a reflection of our personal dedication to this level of specialized care.

Nurses Become Advocates for Certification

Most certification candidates report they applied for certification because a colleague or supervisor recommended it. ONCC Advocates know the value of peer support, and volunteer to promote the benefits of certification at grass roots level. Thanks to these nurses who recently joined the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program.

Terri Boyce, San Antonio, TX
Julie Burris, Georgetown, SC
Christine Figler, Bethlehem, PA
Jennifer Gougas, Mission Hills, CA
Debra Havranek, Commack, NY
Susan Kilbourne, Medford, OR
Janie Lappan, Hamilton, ON
Siobhan McEwen, Hamilton, ON
Enoch Montalban, Loma Linda, CA
Sarah Mutia, Los Angeles, CA
Candice Pielago, Elgin, IL
Clara Reagan, Fall River, MA

If you’d like to join the Advocates Program, please go to oncc.org.

Enabling Nurses (continued)

matology/Oncology Nurses (APHON) annual conference where I was privileged to present the CPON®/CPHON® of the year award to Joyce Wong, and to publicly recognize all of the CPON®/CPHON® nurses who volunteer their time and talents on behalf of ONCC. The contributions of these volunteer leaders which include test item writing, committee service, participation in role delineation studies, and board membership all support the mission of ONCC. Thank you for your exemplary leadership and enabling nurses’ increased access to certification.
A Prescription for Overcoming Test Anxiety
Erica A Fischer-Cartlidge, MSN, RN, CBCN

If you are reading this article you have mastered the most difficult test out there for nursing- THE NCLEX, and you did it with no real life nursing experience to guide you. I know this because you could not be a Registered Nurse otherwise. Yet, despite this major accomplishment, many nurses decline to take a certification exam because of test anxiety. Test anxiety takes on many forms. It can be the overwhelming fear of failing the test that prevents you from preparing for it, or the physical response to test taking such as loss of concentration, or a level of self-doubt that prevents you from performing to your ability on the test. However, much like the barriers of access to resources, time, and money that we discussed in the previous issues, test anxiety is a surmountable obstacle. No, I’m not referring to the use of anxiolytics! The prescription I recommend for treating certification test anxiety is a combination regimen with only one side effect: Success.

Mentorship. This is the foundation of overcoming test anxiety. The first recommendation that I give to a nurse who pursuing certification is to find someone who has passed the test they would like to take and to enlist them as a mentor. This person should be willing to provide guidance on how they approached exam preparation and be an expert in the field. This may be a supervisor, advanced practice nurse, or senior nurse on your unit. Meeting regularly with this individual to clarify content questions and talk through challenges or fears is helpful. Additionally, many people find that test-taking fears actually cause them to avoid studying. Having a mentor that checks in regularly can help prevent procrastination in the preparation phases and keep you on track for your goal.

Support Systems. Many nurses keep their pursuit of certification a secret. They believe that if no one knows they are taking the exam they won’t need to tell anyone if they are unsuccessful. No one completed nursing school in secret or attempted their first IV alone. All of the challenging events we face in life require support. Certification is no different. Gathering peers who are also interested in certification together to study is one way to put a support system in place. Not only are you able to see that you are not the only one with fears but you are able to share in the learning process. Many times one person has a great way to understand or remember a particular concept that may help another in the group. In a support system each person encourages and supports the others through their journey. This is true with colleagues as well with friends and family. Non-nursing family and friends are an invaluable part of your support system. They can help you overcome time barriers when preparing to certify (refer to Certification News Volume XXVIII Issue 3) and they can be of immeasurable help when you are feeling self-doubt. Sometimes all it takes is a loved one sharing their confidence in you to lift your spirits and move you forward on your path. Don’t be afraid to tell people your goal and how they can help you reach it; they are in your life for a reason.

Decide when you will take your certification test before you start studying. At first this may sound unusual; most people believe they should begin studying and then when they feel prepared apply for the test. However, if you have test anxiety this often leads to procrastination because your worry about the test may cause you to never truly feel prepared, even if you are. The amount of time you need to prepare for the test is a delicate balance; if you spend too much time in the “studying phase” you run the risk of allowing your anxiety to grow, causing you to avoid registering for the test. Similarly, preparing under the pressure of time constraints can limit your abilities as well. Set a goal of when you want to take the test and make it firm. Many people find 3-6 months is the perfect amount of time to prepare for a certification exam.

Caring for Self. During the preparation phase it is easy to let basic self-care routines like sleep, diet, and exercise go by the wayside. These behaviors are directly linked to academic success in numerous studies. As nurses, we know that the brain needs nutrients and hydration for basic functioning as well as sleep, like the rest of our body. Incorporating exercise into your study routine is an excellent way to help alleviate tension, burn off nervous energy, and keep blood flowing to the brain. It may be as simple as 10 jumping jacks between chapters that you are reading or a brisk walk after a long study session. Many people find that using guided imagery or relaxation and breathing exercises are helpful when they are feeling nervous or anxious. There are ample amounts of these for no charge available online for download or on CD. Using these can help you center and refocus if you find yourself becoming more focused on the test then the content you are studying.

Test Day. The day before the test is not the time for studying. You have been diligently preparing for months leading up to this. It is extremely unlikely that you will absorb any new and useful knowledge in that last day. The day before your test should focus on clearing your mind, reducing tension, and doing something stress relieving. You may find getting a massage, sharing a meal with a friend, or engaging in another hobby achieves this for you. Plan to get a good night’s sleep so that you are well-rested for the test. Start testing day with a good breakfast, allow yourself more than...
An Original OCN®: Carma Herring Holding Strong for 28 Years
Ashley Leak Bryant PhD, RN-BC, OCN®

Carma Herring, RN, MS, OCN®, Executive Director at UnityPoint Health - John Stoddard Cancer Center in Des Moines, Iowa has maintained her OCN® credential since 1986. ONCC administered the first OCN® examination in 1986, and 1,384 nurses earned the credential of OCN®. Today, there are more than 36,000 nurses certified by ONCC, including more than 30,000 as OCN®.

You may ask, what led Carma to sit for the examination and why has she maintained her certification? Carma had worked as a nurse for over 10 years in surgical services, long term care, and medical/surgical units but had only worked in oncology care for 4 years. She was aware of other specialty certifications but those did not interest her. In 1984, she transitioned from a staff nurse to a Nurse Manager on the oncology unit where she worked and wanted to “practice what she preached to her staff”. She knew OCN® certification would validate her oncology knowledge and demonstrate her expertise.

She has been in oncology nursing for more than 32 years, and she has influenced more than 50 others in becoming certified. As the Executive Director, she instills a sense of pride in certification and in her staff by recognizing oncology certification by displaying their names and credentials on their units. She takes pride as an oncology nurse. She has been actively involved with ONCC for many years including as a member of the Board of Directors, chair of Appeals Committee, and the OCN® Test Development Committee. She recently served as Chair for the OCN® ILNA Development Committee.

Carma, we appreciate your commitment to oncology nursing and for recognizing the importance of mentoring others to achieve oncology certification!

A Model of Excellence: Beaufort Memorial’s Breast Cancer Navigation Team
Deirdre Young RN, BSN, OCN®, CBCN®

Tucked away on the South Carolina coast is a 197-bed institution that is home to one of the state’s premier cancer programs and women’s health initiatives. Beaufort Memorial Hospital serves the surrounding counties and enjoys an affiliation with the renowned Duke Cancer Network, allowing it to offer its patients the latest and best treatments and protocols. Beaufort’s commitment to excellence in patient care does not end with a prestigious affiliation- it is also seen in their Women’s Imaging Center, where both of the nurse navigators have attained CBCN® certification with the full support of their institution.

Amy L. Hane, RN, CBCN® and Jackie Brown, RN, CBCN® are partners in the fight against breast cancer at Beaufort and their roles both complement and overlap one another. They recognize that the CBCN® credential signifies that they have demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the pathophysiology of breast cancer as well as its treatment modalities and symptom management. When asked about the perceived value of certification, Amy replies, “I feel much more comfortable initiating dialogue with the physicians about aspects of a patient’s treatment plan or care that might have not been addressed in conference. I am better equipped to educate women about their disease and treatment as a result of my study and preparation.” Jackie Brown serves as the Clinical Manager of the Women’s Imaging Center and agrees that certification has better prepared her to deal with the many questions that women have about both breast cancer and benign breast disease. Says Jackie, “More and more women research their mammography findings and want to better understand the significance of what they are reading. The certification review course provided me with a wealth of knowledge that I could use to assist and educate these women.”

Both Amy and Jackie agree that certification would not have been possible without the full support of their employer, Beaufort Memorial Hospital’s Women Imaging Department. The hospital has long recognized the value of certification for its nurses and in fact, according to Jackie, during their hiring process it was made clear that certification within one year of hire was expected. The hospital offers full and enthusiastic support by reimbursing nurses for study time, paying for certification review courses, as well as reimbursing nurses for achieving the coveted CBCN®. As a result of this support, the Women’s Imaging Department at Beaufort Memorial has now achieved one hundred percent...
Prescription for Text Anxiety continued

enough travel time in case of unanticipated traffic delays, and wear something comfortable. It is impossible to predict the temperature of the testing room, so bring a light sweater that you can easily add or remove. Before entering the testing center be sure to stop by the restroom and then take a few deep breaths and remind yourself of how much experience you have as a nurse and the time you have dedicated to preparing for this test.

There is no exact number of days or perfect way to prepare for a certification test but developing a routine for yourself that paces your preparation over time is helpful. Likewise, there is no buzzer that goes off when you are prepared. You have overcome your test anxiety at least one other time before in your nursing career. These suggestions will help bring you that much closer to your next achievement.
Employer Spotlight

Pediatric Nurses Shine at Vermont Children’s Hospital

Jeri Ashley MSN, RN, CHPN, AOCNS®

Vermont may be a small state with a population of approximately 600,000, but don’t allow that to fool you, because the Pediatric Oncology Nurses there are giving the rest of us a challenge worth achieving! Vermont Children’s Hospital, located within the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington, Vermont, is a full-service hospital that was named to the U.S. News and World Report “Best Children’s Hospitals” list for 2012–2013. The hospital serves a population of greater than 1 million in Vermont and northern New York by providing a full range of tertiary-level inpatient and outpatient services. Further, it has earned the distinction of being designated a Level I Trauma Center. The University of Vermont Medical Center has 562 beds which include 20 pediatric inpatient beds, 20 NICU beds and 4 PICU beds.

Within the hospital is the Children’s Specialty Center, a state-of-the-art multi-specialty clinic used by both pediatric subspecialists and pediatric surgeons for outpatient visits and procedures. The pediatric infusion clinic is a unique place, where nurses provide care for patients from infancy to 21 years of age who have a variety of medical diagnoses. The pediatric hematology-oncology team sees about 300 patients annually, of which 40-50 are new hematologic and oncologic diagnoses. Seven nurses are on this team, including five RN’s and two pediatric nurse practitioners and ALL seven are certified by the ONCC as CPON® (Certified Pediatric Oncology Nurse) or CPHON® (Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse).

Their reasons for achieving certification varied, but had the same foundation: a desire to know more in order to deliver expert care, and a passion for pediatric hematology-oncology nursing. Here are a few of their comments:

“There are diagnoses and treatments that we do not see at our hospital such as Stem Cell Transplant; but we still wanted to be educated about them because once those patients are discharged from the transplant center, we care for them here in our clinic.”

“We all agree that obtaining our certification has not only increased our knowledge, but it has also increased our confidence in our abilities to care for patient and families.”

See “Vermont” on page 8

Volunteer Spotlight

The Oncology “Assignment” that Became a Lifelong Passion

Diane Otte, RN, MSN, OCN®

My career as an oncology nurse began many years ago when I was “assigned” to a hematology and metabolic inpatient unit as my “first” job when I graduated from nursing school. This was not my intended career path, however at that time we were not allowed to ask for a transfer to a different area until after we had been there for at least six months. I can remember thinking that this was not at all what I had requested- which was a surgical unit where people came in, had surgery and went home in a few days. Left with no alternative, I accepted the position offered and began my career on that unit, thinking I would ask for a transfer as soon as I could.

As a new nurse, I was young and impressionable and I quickly grew to feel very challenged and interested in caring for the very ill hematology patients that we had on our unit. I established strong bonds with patients who stayed for many weeks or months on the unit and were very ill. Seeing many of them survive and go on to “better days” gave me hope and piqued my interest in oncology overall. Within a year I had the opportunity to be one of the “original” nurses opening a new solid tumor unit. This was truly when my love of oncology nursing was born.

After two years on that unit I relocated to another state and found there were no opportunities to work in oncology. This was quite distressing to me but eventually this led me to graduate school with a focus in oncology nursing. By then, I knew I would likely spend the rest of my career as an oncology nurse.

Throughout my career I worked in many different oncology settings, became a member of ONS and began my involvement with various committees. I had the good fortune to work in a university setting with Roberta Scofield who was a strong influence on my interest in certification for oncology nurses. I did whatever I could to expand my knowledge about certification. I had the privilege of serving as a member...
Employers Recognized for Certified Nurse Staffing

Many employers recognize the benefits of having oncology certified nurses on their cancer care team. Oncology certified nurses inspire confidence among their employers, colleagues, and patients because their knowledge has been tested, measured, and found to meet or exceed a national baseline.

Twenty one institutions were recently awarded ONCC recognition plaques, for staffing their facilities with oncology certified nurses. These plaques are available to any patient care setting where the majority of nurses (more than 50%) are ONCC certified. Join the ranks of these employers by requesting your plaque today.

Aspirus Regional Cancer Center, Wausau, WI
Baptist Health, Frankfort Infusion in Lexington, KY
Bothwell Regional Health Center, Susan O'Brien Fischer Cancer Center in Sedalia, MO
Covenant Health, Oncology & Bone Marrow Transplant, Lubbock, TX
Duke Raleigh Hospital, Duke Raleigh Cancer Center, Raleigh, NC
Elliot Health System, Elliot Regional Cancer Center at Londonderry in Manchester, NH
Elliot Health System, Elliot Regional Cancer Center in Manchester, NH
Elliot Health System, Payson Cancer Center in Manchester, NH
Florida Cancer Specialists in Bradenton, FL
Franciscan St. James Health, Comprehensive Cancer Institute in Olympia Fields, IL
Good Samaritan Health System, Hematology/Oncology, PA
Kentucky One Health Flaget Memorial Hospital, Flaget Cancer Center in Bardstown, KY
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Head and Neck Surgery in New York, NY
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology in New York, NY
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Thoracic Oncology Service, New York, NY
Meritus Medical Center, John R. Marsh Cancer Center in Hagerstown, MD
Morris Cancer Center, Medical Oncology/Infusion in Hastings, NE
Oncology Associates, PC in Omaha, NE
Pali Mom Medical Center, Infusion Center in Aiea, HI
Reading Health System, McGlinn Cancer Cancer Institute in West Reading, PA
Sanford Health Roger Maris Cancer Center, Infusion Center in Fargo, ND
Scripps Clinic in Encinitas, CA
Ste. Genevieve County Memorial Hospital, Alan P. Lyss Center for Cancer Care and Clinical Research in Ste. Genevieve, MO
The Cancer Institute at Pioneers Hospital in Brawley, CA
UHealth Sylvester at Coral Springs, CTU, Coral Springs, FL
University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro, Radiation Oncology in Plainsboro, NJ
University Medical Center of Princeton, Outpatient Infusion in Plainsboro, NJ
UPMC Cancer Center, Upper St. Clair in Bethel Park, PA
UPMC Natrona Heights Cancer Center in Natrona Heights, PA
Vermont Children’s Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care, Children’s Specialty Clinic, Pediatric Infusion Bay in Burlington, VT

Vermont Children’s continued

“In the outpatient setting, we see patients and their families frequently during illness and have ample opportunities to provide education to help the patient improve and cope with the distress of illness. Having the certification has provided the knowledge and confidence to provide this much needed patient education. "Obtaining a certification such as CPON® or CPHON® demonstrates to other professionals in health care and to patients that we want to learn how to best serve the pediatric population and that we are committed to life-long learning needed to maintain our certification.”

These nurses should be applauded for achieving 100% certification among their team, and Vermont Children’s Hospital deserves recognition as well. The hospital reimburses the cost of the certification examination and provides a monetary bonus. The hospital pays for certification renewal, provides tuition reimbursement, and helps pay conference fees so nurses can obtain the necessary educational credits. Just as impressive is the Hematology-Oncology Medical Director who explains to all of the newly diagnosed patients and families that “the nurses in the outpatient clinic are specialty certified in pediatric hematology and oncology” and “I believe that these nurses provide excellent patient care.” This level of nursing expertise has increased overall satisfaction and security for the families. At a community level, the certified nurses are recognized and celebrated for their achievement atthe local chapter meetings of the Association of Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurses (APHON).

So now for the challenge: Hear the passion these nurses have about the power of certification. Embrace their collective belief that certification enhances them as nurses and improves the care of those precious patients for whom they care. And lastly, believe that you too can prepare and pass the certification exam designed for your area of interest!
Volunteer Spotlight (continued)

of the first “cut score” committee for the first oncology certification exam. From there I became an item writer and then a member of the Test Development Committee where I eventually served as chair. It was a rewarding and wonderful learning experience. I was also very proud when I could finally become certified myself. Over my career I’ve had many great experiences as a volunteer with ONS and am now very excited about being a new ONCC Board member.

I am currently the Director of the Cancer Center at Mayo Clinic Health System – Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse, WI. I have been in this position for more than 10 years and enjoy my work and collaboration with colleagues throughout the Mayo Enterprise. I’m proud to say that nurses who work in our cancer center are required to become certified in oncology.

During my free time, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, reading, traveling and basket weaving.

I look forward to serving you on the ONCC Board and welcome your ideas and questions throughout the year ahead. Thank you for your vote of confidence!

Model of Excellence (continued)

certification within the department! The benefits of certification for the nurses are reflected in their attendance at Cancer Conferences, where they also interact with another nurse navigator from the nearby naval hospital and collaborate in patient care. Amy notes that having the CBCN® credential demonstrates a true commitment to excellence in her profession and communicates a solid knowledge base and ability to engage physicians and others on the health care team in discussions about what the best plan of care is for a particular patient. Both Amy, who is a program-based breast cancer navigator and Jackie, credit Connie Duke, OCN®, who is Director for the Keyserling Cancer Center at Beaufort, for creating and fostering a culture of excellence that allows them to maintain their CBCN® credentials. Says Jackie, “As an OCN® herself, Connie understands how critically important it is that we continue to learn and hone our knowledge base and clinical skills to benefit our patients. She sets a wonderful example for all to follow.” It is this type of innovative and visionary leadership that has resulted in accolades such as the accreditation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, a designated American College of Radiology Imaging Center of Excellence, and a Duke Network Affiliate. Congratulations to Beaufort for setting the bar so high and for supporting excellence in oncology nursing and patient care!