



certification/news

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

Inside... Free CE Lists . . . 2
Certification Return on Investment . . . 4
Certification Coach Program . . . 3
Employers Recognized . . . 5



Behind the Scenes of Certification Part 1:

Role Delineation Studies and Blueprint Development

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

Twelve pediatric hematology/oncology certified nurse volunteers were selected to be on ONCC's CPHON® Role Delineation Study (RDS) Task Force – a group charged with conducting a role study to update the CPHON® certification examination Test Content Outline, or Test Blueprint. Patsy Clarke, RN, CPHON®, a pediatric hematology oncology nurse practitioner from Texas, was one of the volunteers selected to serve and gave us an inside look at the process.

Patsy applied for the task force in March of 2017 and was notified in July of her acceptance. She joined other certified nurses from all over the country. The task force intentionally had representation from various geographic areas, types of institutions, practice specialties, academic preparation, gender and ethnicity, to represent the

population of certified nurses within the specialty. The group met twice in Pittsburgh, once in August to develop the Role Delineation Study survey instrument, and again in November 2017 to establish the CPHON® test specifications.

One of the committee's first objectives was to design a survey that would be sent to CPON®- and CPHON®- certified nurses and to non-certified nurses who work with pediatric hematology/oncology patients. Another name for a role delineation study is a job task analysis. The survey contained questions on the knowledge and tasks essential to perform their job in pediatric oncology hematology nursing. At their second meeting, the CPHON® Role Delineation Study Task Force reviewed and discussed the survey results. This meeting was facilitated by Larry Fab-

rey, PhD, Chief Psychometrician from PSI, ONCC's test development vendor, ONCC Director of Credentialing Karen Sutherland, PhD, RN, and Certification Program Manager Heather Martorella, MSN RN OCN®. They used their expertise in research and statistics to help the group interpret the survey results. Together they looked at response rates, characteristics of respondents (mostly staff nurses) and survey responses. An iterative discussion was then held to develop a comprehensive content outline (test blueprint) based on the survey results from which test questions would later be developed. The content outlines are also published for nurses to use when preparing to take a certification examination.

This is a standard process for test

continued on page 6

Last Chance to Save 15% on Certification Test Fees

ONCC celebrated Oncology Nursing Month with a 15% discount on certification test fees. Even better, the discount extends beyond oncology nursing month – nurses who apply through June 30, 2018 will receive the lower registration fee.

According to ONCC President Becky O'Shea, "We realize the test fee can

be a barrier for some nurses, especially those who do not have financial support from their employer. This is our way of reducing that barrier and thanking oncology nurses for their commitment to patient care."

Nurses who apply May 1 – June 30 at the discounted fee will be assigned an almost immediate 90-day testing

period within a few weeks of applying. That means nurses should be prepared to take the test within three months after applying.

The discount does not apply to ONCC FreeTake participants. The discount is not retroactive and cannot be refunded to candidates who applied earlier in the year.



Editor's Message

Honoring Our Shared Stories of Passion and Dedication to Our Profession

Erica Fischer-Carlidge, DNP, CNS, CBCN®, AOCNS®

Over the last four years I have had the honor of serving on the ONCC *Certification News* Editorial Board; first as a member and then as a chair for the last three years. This experience has been truly extraordinary. Not only have I been able to meet incredible nurses of various specialties from across the country who have also served on this board, but I've been able to travel the world through their stories of passion and dedication to the profession. The idea of certification crossing the seas and influencing care internationally is a theme we've explored in many issues over the last few years. We've explored challenges that international nurses face when pursuing certification and heard how certification helped one nurse gain the opportunity to travel the world and share knowledge to underserved nursing populations. In this issue we learn about the role certification plays when immigrant nurses are seeking employment in the United States as they strive to aid in our ongoing nursing shortage.

During my term on the Editorial Board I also was able to represent all of you during Leadership Weekend at

I can't emphasize enough how beneficial the experience of volunteering with ONCC has been and I encourage all nurses to get involved in whatever way they can.

the ONCC Board meetings in the development of the strategic plan; providing feedback on the needs and challenges nurses face when pursuing and maintaining certification. Having the opportunity to learn from the incredibly talented staff and Board at ONCC is truly unparalleled. These men and women are all fiercely dedicated to oncology nursing and the validation of knowledge that certification provides which is so closely linked to quality outcomes. In this issue we'll look at another organization that is passionate about promoting certification through a Certification Coach model.

Prior to becoming involved in the Editorial Board I had the opportunity to participate in a Passing Score Task Force for ONCC. This sparked my interest in becoming more involved with the organization and is an opportunity for

which I am continuously grateful. I can't emphasize enough how beneficial the experience of volunteering with ONCC has been and I encourage all nurses to get involved in whatever way they can. The opportunities available vary in type and length of commitment; there is truly something for everyone.

Yet, many nurses are hesitant to become involved because they doubt their ability to contribute to a national organization task force or are unclear what the experience would entail. To help bring more clarity to the various opportunities available we are introducing a series of Behind the Scenes articles over the next few issues that will give an inside look at various committees, task forces, and processes in the certification process, shared by nurses just like yourselves who participate in these activities with ONCC. We hope it will not only inspire you to become the next ONCC volunteers but answer any questions about the "how" and "why" of certification as well.

I truly thank each of you for reading, and continuing to serve our patients every day.

New List of Free CE Coming in July!

Are you looking for free Continuing Education programs you can use for ILNA points for certification renewal? Look for ONCC's Big List of Free CE #6 coming soon. The list will be distributed in late July at the ONS Leadership Weekend, and also will be posted on the ONCC website.

Unfamiliar with ONCC's Big Lists of

Free CE? These are lists of free Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) and Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs and the ILNA subject areas where you may claim ILNA points for completing the programs. These programs are offered by a variety of educational providers. Nurses are not required to use these programs. ONCC

does not receive compensation for nurses who complete these programs. These lists are provided by ONCC as a service for certified nurses.

Some programs are time-limited and may require registration with the provider. Check out ONCC's Big Lists of Free CE (#1-#5) at www.oncc.org/continuing-education/big-lists-free-ce.



Novel Certification Coach Program Aims to Increase Certification Rates

Rebecca Collins, RN, OCN®, CHPN

Part of the ONCC strategic plan is to promote certification, and it may be a strategic effort at many institutions as well. Gina Grabowski (Dorazio) BSN, RN, OCN® has spearheaded a program at her institution that is not only creative but also successful in promoting oncology certification. Gina is an OCN® working in the infusion center at the D'Amour Center for Cancer Care associated with Baystate Hospital in Springfield, Massachusetts. As co-chair of the shared governance Certification Committee, Gina was more than happy to share a process that encourages certification of nurses at her institution.

Gina describes this program as a combination of “promoting certification and use of mentors in the workplace.” Gina shared that in March of last year, she and a fellow nurse approached the Committee at Baystate Hospital with the idea of using Certification Coaches. The Coaches would help guide nurses through the process of becoming certified, maintaining cer-

tification, and obtaining reimbursement for test fees from the facility. As a Certification Coach, Gina maintains a Certification Binder that is “one stop shopping” for information needed for OCN® certification. The Binder contains eligibility requirements, samples of ONCC practice items, continuing education (CE) opportunities for renewal, and copies of any forms needed for reimbursement within the institution. The Certification Binder is kept in a designated area that can be accessed at any time whenever the staff has questions. “The Certification Binder is a sought-after resource by the oncology nursing staff,” Gina stated.

Gina has found that the combination of the Certification Binder and a Certification Coach helps to champion OCN® certification. As an OCN® Certification Coach, Gina stated that questions may range from how her institution reimburses for the test fee to how to obtain CEs needed for ILNA points.

Gina shared that this program extends to other specialty certifica-

tions in her hospital. The committee currently includes a total of 16 Certification Coaches that represent specialty certification throughout the hospital. The coaches meet monthly to review and update program goals and outcomes. Gina shared some her long-term goals for the certification program: move the information from a binder to an online resource, participate in the ONCC FreeTake Program, and track the increase in certification in her oncology area. Next steps for the program include expanding outreach to the inpatient oncology department, private oncology practices and satellite hospitals in the system.

Gina sees the Certification Coach model as supportive program and a positive way to decrease apprehension about certification. The program addresses a need to promote certification and answer questions staff may have about certification. This is a great way to provide that extra support to help fellow nurses be successful in certification.

Anna Vioral Joins ONCC Board of Directors

Anna Vioral, PhD, MEd, RN, OCN®, BMTCN®, Director of Oncology Practice and Professional Development at Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania joined the ONCC Board of Directors in May 2018. Vioral was elected to the Board in December 2017 for a three-year term.

Dr. Vioral brings a wealth of oncology nursing expertise as a clinician, educator, and researcher to her new



Transplant Certified Nurse (BMTCN®)

role on the ONCC Board of Directors. She also has extensive experience in the certification process. She served on ONCC's Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN®) and Blood and Marrow

Test Development Committees; on the OCN® Role Delineation Study Task Force; and as a test item writer for the OCN® and BMTCN® examinations.

“I believe a rigorous, evidence-based certification process promotes excellence in patient care and professional practice. I'm looking forward to joining the Board and working to further enhance ONCC's certification programs for oncology nurses.”



Certification Provides Return on Investment for Immigrant Nurses

Mohamad Younes, RN, BScN, CPHON®

When I first became certified, I never thought my certification would provide me an advantage over other candidates in job interviews. I initially pursued my specialty certification in 2012 because my employer in Saudi Arabia was encouraging it as part of their journey toward Magnet designation. Additionally, reimbursement was being provided for the exam and study materials.

Beyond the self-satisfaction of achieving my Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse (CPHON®) credential, there were a number of advantages in my organization to becoming certified: I was recognized as the first CPHON® in my organization on Certified Nurses Day; I received a sponsorship and business leave to attend conferences, including the 37th APHON Conference, the 2013 Magnet conference, and the Society of Critical Care Medicine Conference 2014 in Lebanon where I presented. I was also promoted to a clinical instructor role on the pediatric surgical unit.

There were less tangible perks to becoming certified as well. I started directing my energy into deploying the knowledge I learned to improve my patients' experience with their battle. On the unit level, through my insight from my CPHON® exam preparation, I was able to participate in several performance improvement projects and task forces that resulted in evidence-based practice changes.

They were amazed by how I used the knowledge I gained from certification and put it into practice, and admired how I grew into a professional role model for my colleagues through certification and recertification.

Perhaps the most unexpected benefit of obtaining my certification came during my job interview with my first U.S. employer. For an international nurse, it is required to find an employer to sponsor his/her I-140 petition after passing the NCLEX and English test. One of the challenges in finding an employer sponsor is that they must hold the position vacant for twelve months until the immigration process is finalized with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Most international nurses seek a medical-surgical position because of the unpopularity of that assignment and the nursing shortage in that specialty, which makes employers more willing to hold the position. I didn't want to give up my eight years of oncology experience, though I was willing to do anything and everything to get to my American Dream.

Knowing the importance of on-

colony certification to employers, I hoped that my CPHON® certification would help me in my pursuit of an oncology position in the U.S. I was sure to draw the conversation during my interview to my certification and the benefits that I had found because of my certification. They were amazed by how I used the knowledge I gained from certification and put it into practice, and admired how I grew into a professional role model for my colleagues through certification and recertification. We spoke at length about how

my CPHON® certification changed my identity as a nurse and found a connection even across the world via Skype. The result was a job offer for a Triage Oncology Nurse position the very next day, which I gladly accepted.

The return on investment for my certification has been far beyond what I could have imagined when I first began studying for the exam. As soon as I arrived in the United States, I started helping other International nurses through social media with their journey towards their American Dream. Now I have more than 40,000 views on my videos and three-fold worth of comments, questions, and inquiries. My main advice when I get asked about assignments and job offers is, "Get a specialty certification in your field of practice". I am a huge advocate of specialty certification, especially oncology certification, because it changed the path of my life.



Employers Receive Recognition for Certified Nurse Staffing

Congratulations to these institutions that were recently presented with an ONCC Employer Recognition Plaque for staffing their facility with oncology certified nurses.

These free plaques are available to any patient care setting where the majority (more than 50%) of Registered Nurses are certified by ONCC. Special recognition goes to organizations in bold type who indicated a 100% certification rate at the time of their request. Request your plaque (or an updated certificate for an existing plaque) at www.oncc.org/employer-recognition-plaque-order-form.

AnMed Health/Levine Cancer Institute in Anderson, SC

Anne Arundel Medical Center, Radiation Oncology in Annapolis, MD

Atlanta Cancer Care, Conyers Infusion in Conyers, GA

Baystate Franklin Medical Center, Oncology/Infusion in Greenfield, MA
Beaumont Health-Troy, Radiation Oncology in Sterling Heights, MI

Beaumont Hospital, Troy, Wilson Cancer Resource Center in Sterling Heights, MI

Cancer Center of Davidson County, Wake Forest Baptist Health—Lexington, in Lexington, NC

Cancer Centers of SW Oklahoma—Duncan, in Duncan, Oklahoma

Cancer Centers of SW Oklahoma in Lawton, OK

Carolina East Hematology/Oncology Associates in New Bern, NC

Contrastate Medical Center, Radiation Oncology in Freehold, NJ

City of Hope Foundation in Mission Hills, CA

Cleveland Clinic—Twinsburg in Twinsburg, OH

Community Health Network, Cancer Center South—Medical Oncology in Indianapolis, IN

Community Hospital, Grand Valley Oncology in Grand Junction, CO

Dana Farber Community Cancer Care, Methuen Office in Methuen, MA

East Jefferson General Hospital, Oncology Leadership in Metairie, LA

East Jefferson General Hospital, Radiation/Oncology in Metairie, LA

Florida Cancer Specialists in Brandon, FL

Honor Health Research Institute, Oncology Clinical Trials in Scottsdale, AZ

Houston Methodist Hospital, Cell & Gene Therapy Outpatient Department in Houston, TX

Huntsville Hospital St. Jude Affiliate Clinic, in Huntsville, AL

Irene & Howard H. Baker Cancer Center in Harrogate, TN

James M Stockman Cancer Institute in Frederick, MD

Lehigh Valley Health Network Cancer Institute, Bangor Location in Pen Argyl, PA

Lehigh Valley Health Network, Breast Health Services in Allentown, PA

Lehigh Valley Health Network Cancer Institute, Lehighon Location in Lehighon, PA

Lehigh Valley Health Network Cancer Institute—LVPG in Allentown, PA

Lehigh Valley Health Network Cancer Institute, Muhlenberg Campus in Bethlehem, PA

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Breast Infusion Unit in New York, NY

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Chemo 1275 in Great Neck, NY

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Outpatient Adult Bone Marrow Transplant Service in New York, NY

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Thoracic Oncology Service in New York, NY

New Ulm Medical Center, Virginia Piper Cancer Institute (VPCI) in New Ulm, MN

Oklahoma Cancer Specialists and Research Institute in McAlester, OK

Oncology Hematology Associates in Springfield, MO

Orlando VAMC, 2F Clinic in Orlando, FL

Park Ridge Health, Park Ridge Infusion Center in Hendersonville, NC

Park Ridge Health, Haywood Infusion Center in Hendersonville, NC

Park Ridge Health, Asheville Infusion Center in Hendersonville, NC

Park Ridge Health, Weaverville Infusion Center in Henderson, NC

PIH Health Hospital Whittier, Infusion Center in Whittier, CA

Rush Copley Medical Center, Outpatient Cancer Care Center in Aurora, IL

Rush Oak Park Hospital, Rush University Cancer Center in Oak Park, IL

Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, Cancer Care Center—Boise, in Boise, ID

Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, Cancer Care Center—Caldwell, in Caldwell, ID

Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, Cancer Care Center—Nampa, in Nampa, ID

Smilow Cancer Center—Guilford, in Guilford, CT

St Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital, Outpatient Oncology in Pontiac, MI

Tennessee Oncology, McMinnville Clinic in McMinnville, TN

University Hospitals of Cleveland, Seidman Cancer Center at Landerbrook in Mayfield Heights, OH

University of Virginia, Community Oncology—Pantops in Charlottesville, VA

University of Virginia Medical Center, UVA Community Oncology Augusta in Fishersville, VA

UPMC Susquehanna Cancer Center in Williamsport, PA

Virginia Mason Medical Center, Outpatient Infusion Center in Seattle, WA

Winter Haven Hospital, Cassidy Cancer Center in Davenport, FL

Behind the Scenes continued from page 1

development in the industry and is repeated for all ONCC certification examinations every four years to be certain the certification examinations reflect current practice. When the Test Content Outlines (or Blueprints) are updated, volunteer subject matter experts are invited to attend workshops to write new items that match the revised blueprint.

Patsy was not at liberty to reveal much about the new CPHON® Test Content Outline because it won't be released until later this summer. However, she could let us know that the

revised exam will incorporate the new and emerging therapies in pediatric hematology/oncology. She also shared how flattered she was to be chosen to participate in this important work and how impressed she was with the professionalism of the ONCC organization and rigor of the process. She shared that the networking opportunity with other pediatric hematology/oncology nurses was very invigorating and professionally satisfying.

Stay tuned for Behind the Scenes Part II when we continue the journey and explore the item writing process!

New Certification Eligibility Criteria Starts in 2019

In 2019, nurses who want to obtain initial certification will be required to have more experience as a Registered Nurse (RN) and more hours of specialty practice before they can apply for a certification test.

According to ONCC President Becky O'Shea, APRN, OCN®, AOCNS®, CBCN® "Work experience is crucial in the attainment of current knowledge and skill in a specialty area. Most undergraduate nursing programs do not provide indepth oncology content or practice experience."

Initial test candidates for the Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN®), Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse (CPHON®), Certified Breast Care Nurse (CBCN®), and Blood and Marrow Transplant Certified Nurse (BMTCN®) will be required to meet the new eligibility criteria, which includes:

- A current, active, unencumbered RN license; and
- A minimum of two years (24

months) of practice as an RN within the four years (48 months) prior to application; and

- A minimum of 2,000 hours of specialty nursing practice within the four years (48 months) prior to application (specialty nursing practice includes: OCN®—adult oncology nursing practice; CPHON® pediatric hematology/oncology nursing practice; CBCN® breast care nursing practice; BMTCN® BMT nursing practice); and

- A minimum of 10 contact hours of credential-specific continuing nursing education or an academic elective completed within the three years (36 months) prior to application.

The new eligibility criteria will not apply to nurses who are renewing certification.

The new eligibility criteria goes into effect on January 1, 2019.

Learn more at <https://www.oncc.org/about-oncc/news/oncc-announces-new-eligibility-criteria-initial-certification-2019>

ONCC Certified Nurses

as of June 1, 2018

Credential	Number Certified
OCN®	31,259
CPHON®	2,405
AOCNP®	1,539
AOCNS®	457
CBCN®	886
BMTCN®	1,684
AOCN®	663
CPON®	861

ONCC Certification News Editorial Board

Erica A. Fischer-Carlidge, MSN, RN, CBCN®
AOCNS® - Chair
Lisa Bjorkelo, MSN, RN, CPON®, BMTCN®, CNE, CPN
Becky Collins, RN, OCN®, CHPN
Amy Evers, BSN, RN, OCN®
Mohamad Younes, RN, BScN, CPHON®
Lori Williams PhD, RN, APRN, OCN®, AOCN®
- Board Liaison

ONCC Board of Directors

Rebecca O'Shea, RN, MSN, OCN®, AOCNS®, CBCN®, *President*
Diane Otte, RN, MSN, OCN®, *Vice President*
Melody Watral, MSN, RN, CPNP-BC, CPON®, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Angie Caton, RN, OCN®, CHPN
Nickolaus Escobedo, RN, MSN, OCN®, NE-BC
Chien-Chi Huang, *Public Member*
Nancy Tena, MSN, RN, CPHON®, BMTCN®
Virginia Vaitones, MSW, OSW-C
Anna Vioral, PhD, MEd, RN, OCN®, BMTCN®
Lori Williams, PhD, RN, APRN, OCN®, AOCN®
Brenda Nevidjon, MSN, RN, FAAN, *Ex-Officio*
Cyndi Miller Murphy, MSN, RN, CAE, FAAN
Ex-Officio

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.

Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation, 125 Enterprise Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1214 (877-769-ONCC or 412-859-6104, phone; 412-859-6168, fax; oncc@oncc.org, e-mail; www.oncc.org, website)