Behind the Scenes of New Test Development

Erica Fischer-Cartlidge, MSN, CNS, CBCN®, AOCNS®

With the newest certification test, the BMTCN™, having made its debut in 2014, many nurses have asked how specialty tests are chosen and developed. Or if ONCC is planning more specialty tests. To find these answers, I spoke with Cyndi Miller Murphy, RN, MSN, CAE, ONCC Executive Director. You asked – we’re answering!

Where Do New Programs Come From?
The development of specialty tests falls under Program Development at ONCC. Program development includes certification exams (like the OCN®, CPHON®, or BMTCN™ tests) and certificate programs (like the ONS/ONCC Chemotherapy Biotherapy Certificate program and the Radiation Oncology Nursing Certificate program). These programs begin from an idea that comes from direct care nurses or members of the ONCC Board. That idea is then evaluated to ensure it meets the mission and strategic plan of ONCC as an organization, and to determine if the subject matter meets the definition of a specialty.

What qualifies as a ‘specialty’?
Before determining if a subject area is appropriate for a new program ONCC investigates if it meets the criteria for a specialty. This means that there is a national or international organization for the specialty, how many dedicated nurses work in the specialty area, and what literature and standards exist on caring for this population. In order to move forward with program development, ONCC ensures that there are at least 2,000 nurses dedicated to the specialty across the country and that specialty nursing jobs exist outside of the generalist in oncology.

What are the other considerations when deciding to create a program?
Before starting the process to form a new program, ONCC verifies that there is not already an existing certification exam which is valuable, of strong quality, and matches the high standards to which ONCC programs adhere. If other certification exams or programs meet these qualifications then ONCC will not...
Seven Years of Reflection on the ONCC Editorial Board
Ashley Leak Bryant PhD, RN-BC, OCN®

When I joined the ONCC Certification News Editorial Board in 2008, Heather Mackey RN, MSN, ANP, AOCN® was Chair and mentored me as a new board member. Thank you, Heather, for introducing me to volunteer opportunities within ONCC and for your leadership! Two years later, Janice Nuuhiwa, RN, MSN, APN/CNS, CPON® became Chair and I appreciated her guidance and mentorship as I transitioned into the role as Chair.

It is with pleasure to have served with a splendid group of certified nurses on the Editorial Board. As I write my last Editor’s message, I want to thank the Editorial board members for their service and oncology expertise, including Deirdre Young RN, BSN, OCN®, Diane Otte, RN, MS, OCN®, and Theresa Gannon RN, BSN, OCN® who will continue to serve on the board. I would also like to thank Michele Farrington, BSN, RN, CPHON® for her pediatric expertise and Jeri Ashley RN, MSN, AOCNS® for her advanced practice expertise, both completed their terms in April.

It is with excitement that welcome Erica Fischer-Cartlidge, RN, MSN, CNS, CBCN®, AOCNS® as the new Chair.

Lastly, I express my deep appreciation to Pam Asfahani, ONCC staff liaison for Certification News her support and enthusiasm for oncology certified nursing. Cyndi Miller Murphy, RN, MSN, CAE, ONCC Executive Director—it has been a pleasure to work and learn with you over the years. ONCC continues to “promote excellence in patient care and professional practice by validating specialized knowledge in oncology nursing and related specialties.”

Transition: From Board Member to Board Chair
Erica Fischer-Cartlidge, MSN, CNS, CBCN®, AOCNS®

It is with great excitement that I transition from an editorial board member for ONCC Certification News to chair. Certification is something I have always been passionate about and I have loved writing my whole life. The blending of these areas through Certification News has been such an honor to engage in. I have had a wonderful opportunity over the last year to learn more about the mission of ONCC, the value of nurses’ feedback in the organization, and the role that we play in bringing information to nurses. Ashley’s dedication to and passion for ONCC Certification News is infectious and I could not have asked for someone better to guide me through this transition. I look forward to all of the exciting new topics that we will bring to Certification News in upcoming issues, generated from new initiatives from ONCC, from readers and their accomplishments, and from board members. Certification News is truly a publication generated by the needs, interests, and successes of the oncology certified nurse, and I am so happy to be stepping into the role of chair for such an inspirational effort.

Watral Joins Board of Directors

Melody Watral, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, CPON®, a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Instructor at UNC School of Medicine in Chapel Hill, North Carolina joined the ONCC Board of Directors as the CPON®/CPHON® representative. She was elected in the 2015 ONCC Board of Directors Election that concluded in March.

Watral’s leadership experience includes a recent term as President of the Association of Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurses (APHON) Board of Directors. While serving on the APHON Board, she also served as the APHON liaison to the ONCC Board of Directors.

Watral began her three-year term on the Board in May of this year.

Welcome, Melody Watral!
High Profile Recognition and Celebration for Oncology Certified Nurses

Michele Farrington BSN, RN, CPHON®

Baptist Health Lexington located in Lexington, Kentucky places high value on oncology nursing certification, as it is a requirement to qualify for an advanced practice oncology nurse position and is preferred if applying for an oncology staff nurse position. Staff nurses who are not certified upon hire must take the Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN®) test within one year of meeting eligibility criteria. Full financial support and reimbursement is available for nurses obtaining and/or renewing the OCN® certification. Additional support is available to nurses preparing for the exam in the form of free on-site OCN® preparation classes, offered throughout the year, which nurses are encouraged to attend on work time. Reference materials, such as the Core Curriculum for Oncology Nursing, which was published in collaboration with the Oncology Nursing Society, are available through the hospital’s medical library, and the organization supports a two-day OCN® certification review course delivered by a nationally recognized speaker, which nurses may attend free of charge using paid education days.

As an organization, Baptist Health Lexington strategically invests in marketing, publications, and events showcasing oncology nursing certification and award recognition. All oncology areas have Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) recognition plaques displayed to honor and recognize the OCN’s working in that area. In 2012, the goal of 100% of eligible nurses defined by ONCC eligibility criteria being certified in the Outpatient Cancer Care setting became a reality. A full-scale celebration event was planned to honor the time and dedication put forth by this group of nurses and all other OCNs throughout the organization. Posters were hung in each patient care area to recognize the OCN’s; cupcakes with “OCN” were distributed to staff, patients, and caregivers; and patients and staff wore pink stickers “My nurses are OCN” throughout the day. Recognition of this certification feat did not go unnoticed among the support staff who voluntarily made sashes for all OCN’s and “OCN in Training” sashes for those not yet meeting eligibility criteria. A catered lunch was sponsored for the certified nurses with invitations extended to senior leadership and the entire interdisciplinary team. Patient care settings were decorated and information was prominently displayed for patients and caregivers outlining the importance of certification and the significance of achieving oncology certification.

Baptist Health Lexington strongly believes that patients benefit from certification because OCNs are better prepared to anticipate and meet the needs of cancer patients. Kay Ross, MSN, RN, AOCN®, Vice President Oncology and Clinical Support Services echoed this sentiment, “Our certification achievements demonstrate the specialized knowledge of our nurses and our organization’s commitment to providing high quality patient care.”

Congratulations to Baptist Health Lexington for celebrating certification success in such high profile forums. This level of recognition is valued not only by the OCN’s but also colleagues, senior leaders, patients, and families as it is these successes that set a high bar for excellence to follow. Innovation at Baptist Health Lexington will continue as additional ways to encourage and support oncology nurses to become certified are discovered in the future.

Author’s note: The author would like to thank Stacy Stanifer, MSN, RN, APRN, AOCNS®, Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Baptist Health Lexington for her review and article contributions.

Website Redesigned with Nurses in Mind

If you haven’t been to the ONCC website lately, be sure to visit soon. A redesigned website was launched at the ONS Congress, with a new look and streamlined navigation. The centerpiece of the navigation scheme is a certification-central navigation bar with links to certifications, renewal, resources, test centers, and an account login page for easy access to all certification related accounts (e.g., test and renewal registration, ONC-PRO logs, LearningBuilder, ONCC/ONS Profile). The new site also features robust search functionality.

The redesigned site offers that same great information in a streamlined format. Recognizing that nurses are often pressed for time, the essential topics were positioned front and center on the new site, while the search function offers a quick-find solution for those who need specific information quickly.

Take a look at the new site at oncc.org.
Invest in Yourself and Strengthen Your Oncology Nursing Practice: Why I Attended the ONS Congress
Theresa M. Gannon BSN, RN, OCN®

Spring is the perfect time of year to clear out the cobwebs and dust off the same way of doing things and opening the blinds (and your mind!) to new information, contacts, and possibilities. It is also a good excuse to check in on those professional New Year’s resolutions we made a few months ago.

Those are a few of the reasons I attended the ONS 40th Annual Congress in Orlando, Florida, where I joined 3,000 colleagues from all nursing avenues in April. We were able to earn up to 30 hours of continuing nursing education (CNE) by attending educational sessions, and many came early for the preconference workshops. Certified nurse may be able to use CE earned at Congress for ONC-PRO or ILNA renewal points, while everyone benefitted from networking with new, advanced, and veteran nurses. I was amazed by the quality, up-to-the-minute evidenced-based offerings I could attend.

At this year’s ONCC Recognition Breakfast, Karren Kowalski, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN – President and CEO of the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence discussed the importance of nursing leadership. Dr. Kowalski served in the United States Army Nurse Corps and was stationed in Viet Nam, working in a surgical hospital similar to the one in M*A*S*H. She has an impressive curriculum vitae spanning role titles of project director, frontline leader, clinical scholar, professor, assistant vice president, administrator, head nurse, author, co-editor, award recipient, honoree, past president, president, and national speaker. Her presentation was sprinkled with entertaining anecdotes that illustrated there is leadership potential in every nurse. The 2015 ONCC award winners were recognized (watch for profiles of these nurses in the next issue) at this popular event for certified nurses.

I also stopped by the ONCC Certification Oasis – a popular spot attendees can visit – often. Advertised as a place to relax, refresh, and rejuvenate, I found it to be the “time-out” where I could take a break from a busy conference schedule and unwind with new friends, enjoy refreshments. Some lucky nurses were able to relish a chair massage! ONCC staff were on hand to provide helpful assistance with questions regarding certification, test-taking tips, and even personalized learning plans for certification renewal.

In short – it was a comprehensive oncology nursing conference that was well-worth the trip. If you couldn’t make it this year, invest in yourself and strengthen your practice by attending next year’s Congress.

Building Tomorrow’s Nurses continued

It is a badge of honor for oncology nurses everywhere. Secondly, it is tangible proof that we have been tested on our knowledge base of cancer care and we have passed that test. Finally, when the certification credential is displayed – whether on an employee’s name badge or plaque on the wall in a medical setting, it demonstrates to the patients that the nurse who provides their care has up to date knowledge of cancer nursing.

In order to assist the oncology nurses and nurse navigators who are employed in the outpatient oncology settings, the hospital foundation provides assistance by funding the fees for certification review courses, certification exams and re-certification. This funding provides equal opportunity for outpatient nurses who often did not have access to the same resources as the inpatient staff. The nurses who are employed in the inpatient, acute care setting in oncology have access to resources in their clinical ladder and recruitment and retention programs that ensure that all eligible nurses can sit for their certification exam at the first available opportunity.

As a result, on the inpatient unit, well over half of all eligible RN’s are certified, while another group of nurses who are not yet eligible to test are eagerly preparing for the day when they can.

Through the generosity and support of the hospital’s foundation, all four oncology nurse navigators became OCN®-certified, with two of those navigators also being Certified Breast Care Nurses as well. The hospital foundation was established in 1990 to develop the resources for providing quality health services that meet the needs of the many patients served by the hospital. The Foundation’s board believes that helping oncology nurses achieve and maintain their certification and thereby increase their knowledge base, is one way of providing quality health care to cancer patients. Staff at Lexington Medical Center feel tremendous gratitude to their organization’s foundation for helping to build better oncology nurses for the patients of tomorrow.
Certified Nurses Are Everywhere

Have you seen the public service announcement (PSA) about certified nurses being everywhere? ONCC has contributed to this effort to get a universal message out to the public about the importance of certified nurses. ONCC provided financial support for the program and several oncology certified nurses are featured in the PSA. The reach of this program continues to expand with more than 36,000 broadcasts and over 290,000,000 views to date. Nine specialty nursing certification organizations supported the development of this campaign, which has now aired on 422 television stations across the country, including on the national edition of CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley in January, February and March. Learn more about this project and view the PSA at http://www.certifiednurses.org/

Future Test Services Provider Determined

Periodically, the ONCC Board of Directors does an extensive review of testing services needed to meet the needs of the constituency. This process began last fall with the release of a “Request for Proposals” (RFP) to multiple companies that provide these services. A small group of ONCC Board members and staff served as a review panel for this process. This panel met by conference call to discuss the approach to review the proposals. The panel members then reviewed and scored the proposals independently and selected the finalists – the companies that could best meet ONCC’s needs for testing services. These finalists were presented to the panel in mid-April, and the panel presented a vendor recommendation for approval by the full ONCC Board of Directors.

Prometric will deliver testing services beginning January 1, 2016. Prometric is a trusted test development and delivery provider to more than 350 organizations worldwide. They securely deliver an average of 9 million exams per year. Staff from both ONCC and Prometric will work closely together to ensure a fair testing experience for every candidate.

Who’s Staffing Their Facilities with Certified Nurses?

Twenty eight institutions recently joined the ranks of organizations who’ve been recognized for staffing their facilities with certified nurses. Each of these organizations was presented with an ONCC recognition plaque. ONCC provides these plaques free-of-charge to any patient care setting where a majority (more than 50%) of the RNs are ONCC-certified.

Adventist Hinsdale Hospital, Ambulatory Care in Hinsdale, IL
Andrews and Patel Associates, Camp Hill, PA
Baptist Health Lexington, Lexington GYN-Oncology in Lexington, KY
Baptist, Myelosuppression & Surgical Oncology in Cordova, TN
Baylor, Scott & White Cancer Center in Waco, TX
Cancer Center of Pasco Pinellas in Holiday, FL
Kaiser Permanente, Oncology Sunnside in Clackamas, OR
MD Anderson Physicians Network in Houston, TX
Medical Oncology Associates of Long Island, PC in Woodbury, NY
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, STG in New York, NY
MetroWest Medical Center, Department of Medical Oncology & Hematology in Framingham, MA
Olympic Medical Cancer Center, Medical/Infusion Oncology in Sequim, WA
Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Hospital, Outpatient Infusion Clinic in Lafayette, LA
Pen Bay Medical Center, Cancer Care Center in Rockport, ME
Rideout Cancer Center, Medical Oncology in Marysville, CA
Pennsylvania Hospital, Abramson Cancer Center in Philadelphia, PA
St. Agnes Hospital, Cancer Center in Baltimore, MD
Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas, Jackson 2 Oncology in Dallas, TX
UCLA Medical Center Santa Monica, 4SW Oncology in Santa Monica, CA
UW/Valley Medical Center, Radiation Oncology in Renton, WA
UW/Valley Medical Center, Infusion Center in Renton, WA
University of Miami, Plantation CTU in Plantation, FL

University of Vermont Medical Center, Radiation Oncology in Burlington
VA Medical Center, Radiation Oncology in Milwaukee, WI
Virginia Hospital Center, Outpatient Infusion Center in Arlington, VA
Wentworth-Douglass Hospital, Seacoast Cancer Center in Dover, NH

Does your institution qualify for a plaque? Do you need to update the names on an existing plaque? Apply for one at www.oncc.org/resource-center/employers-advocates, or request a replacement certificate to update your current plaque.
New Advocates Promote Certification at Work and in Community

Promoting the benefits of certification at the grassroots level is the purpose of the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program. Advocates are Thirty three certified nurses recently joined the effort, bringing the current number of advocates to 686.

Tara Barrett, Goldston, NC
Clara Beaver, Detroit, MI
Kirsten Berge, LaCrosse, WI
Cecilia Billedo, Los Angeles, CA
Lisa Bjorkelo, Philadelphia, PA
Melanie Bobry, Pittsford, NY
Susan Box, Baton Rouge, LA

Charmaine Chung-Boyce, Washington, DC
Brittney Browne, Cincinnati, OH
Jennifer Edwards, Shreveport, LA
Barbara Gimbert, Detroit, MI
Mary Kris Godley, Cary, NC
Paula Gould, Panama City, FL
Connie Hayes, Mentor, OH
Alice Hohol, Deland, FL
Deanna Hill, Portland, OR
Julie Jordan, Coeur D'Alene
Pamela Laszewski, Detroit, MI
Jeri Liebner, Grand Blanc, MI
Shari Mott, Lawrence, KS
Angela Nooner, Oklahoma City, OK
Amy Patterson, Tampa, FL

OCN®s Wanted for Board

Nominees

If you’re ready to take your leadership skills to next level, could serving on the ONCC Board of Directors be a next step?

• One position on the ONCC Board of Directors will be open for election this year. That position must be filled by a nurse who hold current OCN® certification.

• Serving on the Board can offer you a number of benefits, including opportunities to:
  • sharpen your leadership skills
  • expand your network of personal and professional colleagues
  • enhance your role as a nurse leader
  • help shape the future of certification.

The position is for a three year term beginning in May 2016. Nominations materials are available on the ONCC website at www.oncc.org. Completed nominations must be received by August 10, 2015.

Important Dates and Deadlines to Remember

Mark you calendar with these upcoming dates and deadlines related to certification.

August 5, 2015
Application deadline for tests outside the US/Canada. Tests will be administered at select international locations November 2-30, 2015 only.

September 1, 2015
Application deadline for 2015 tests. Note: nurses who apply after September 1 may not be offered a full 90-day testing period before the year ends.

September 15, 2015
Early bird application deadline for ONC-PRO renewal applications (save $100 off the final deadline fee)

September 30, 2015
Applications due for 2016 Roberta Scofield Memorial Award applications (may only be used for a 2016 certification registration)

October 15, 2015
Final application deadline date for ONC-PRO renewal applications (with the full, non-discounted fee)