What better place to get to know Suleika Jaouad than her website? But first, I stumbled upon a YouTube video that got me hooked before I knew much at all. The video documented her trip to Las Vegas for a conference for young adults with cancer. With her were four young women also battling cancer; friends she met through the internet. Seeing these young women in the hotel suite, running around, jumping on the bed, wearing wigs, shoes everywhere, medication bottles by the dozens made me take pause. They were sharing their cancer journey, experiences, memories and pictures. What makes Suleika special is that she doesn’t just share the journey with her close friends.

Suleika Jaouad is an Emmy Award-winning writer, advocate, public speaker and cancer survivor. “Cancer is not fair but I think the most important thing is not to focus on that interruption, but to really figure out how we can make the most of these interrupted life moments and take the time that we have and move forward and look forward” she says.

In 2010, Suleika graduated with honors from Princeton University and moved to Paris to work as a paralegal. Shortly after, she fell ill and moved home with her parents in New York. Being diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) at age 22 turned her life upside down.

During her 7 months in isolation as she prepared for and received a bone marrow transplant, she launched a blog called “Secrets of Cancerhood.” Her initial goals were to keep her friends updated on her status and keep herself busy while staying in the hospital. Little by little, she docu-

Nurses and their employers appreciate the value of obtaining a specialty certification. But finding the time to prepare and take the exam can be challenging. At my institution we are trying new strategies to make test preparation more convenient.

My institution’s tuition reimbursement benefit for nurses who work 0.5 FTE or more covers exam cost. Additionally, our professional advancement program gives credit for certification. Despite these benefits, we have found it difficult to prepare nurses for the CPHON® test. Unlike many institutions, our inpatient and outpatient Hematology and Oncology units are separate entities and nurses tend to become experts in one or the other. In general, our test prep challenge is educating inpatient hematology nurses about oncology and vice versa.

We have offered a CPHON® review course at least twice per year for some time. The course is taught gratis by staff nurses, advanced practice nurses and a Child Life Therapist. The course is free for staff and provides 7.5 Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) contact hours. Nurses attend on their own time; generally a day off. Scheduling has been
Editor’s Message: You’re Invited! Become a Certification Advocate
Erica Fischer-Cartlidge, MSN, RN, CBCN®, AOCNS®

Certification advocates are an essential part of the effort to promote certification within the profession of nursing and individual organizations. Chances are, if you are reading this newsletter you may already meet the criteria—an oncology certified nurse who believes in the value of specialty certification.

Advocates promote the benefits of certification. They are a resource for their work colleagues, those in the nursing community or in the local chapter of their professional organization. Still not sure if you should become a Certification Advocate? See the Top 5 reasons why we think you’re perfect for the role!

5. Access to free resources. ONCC provides lots of resources for promoting certification on their website. These range from tips and ideas to brochures and posters. There are also downloadable templates for Good luck and Congratulations cards available.

4. You’ll be the first to hear about new happenings in certification—including first dibs at ordering Certified Nurses’ Day supplies.


2. Rewards. Each time you refer someone to become certified and they list you as their advocate you become eligible for rewards.

1. Small Commitment-Big Impact. Becoming an advocate doesn’t require a big time commitment at all. In fact, you’re probably already promoting certification in many ways without realizing it. Yet, the impact of assisting others in preparing for and making the decision to become certified has huge implications for both patient care and an individual’s development.

Ready to become a Certification Advocate or learn more? Visit the ONCC website at http://www.oncc.org/promote-certification.

From Cancer Patient to Emmy Award Winner continued

mented her journey by reporting from the front lines of her hospital room. The process of writing publicly about something that felt so private felt counterintuitive, unnatural and even wrong in certain moments, she says.

Her blog, “Secrets of Cancerhood,” caught the attention of Martin Gottlieb, her former journalism professor at Princeton. Gottlieb passed it along to the editor and founder of the New York Times’ Well Blog, Tara Parker Pope. From there, Suleika was invited to write a series column. Within hours of publishing her first “Life, Interrupted” column, emails began arriving. They included messages from healthy young women who could relate to the life interruption perspective, and from patients on the transplant floor she couldn’t see because they were in isolation rooms right down the hall.

When I read what Suleika wrote, I found it very useful as a reader and as a nurse. It helps the public understand the disease and how to deal with it. She writes about issues young men and women may find difficult to verbalize: advocacy, sexual health, fertility and relationships. Suleika shares her feelings as a young adult with cancer, her fears about the future, and tells stories about friendship, love, and hope.

Based on the success of her column, the New York Times proposed a video blog to document her journey through cancer. The video series, Life Interrupted, which told the story of life through cancer, received an Emmy Award.

Today, Suleika travels the country participating in workshops and speaking at universities, hospitals and special events. Pediatric oncology certified nurses from across the world will have the opportunity to share in her journey when she takes the stage as the keynote speaker at the ONCC Recognition Breakfast for Oncology Certified Nurses during the APHON Annual Conference.

Save 30% on Certification Test Fees

May 1-July 31, 2016 only!

Apply for an ONCC certification test between May 1 and July 31, 2016 and you’ll save 30% off the regular member and nonmember fees, in honor of ONCC’s 30th Anniversary of certification testing.

If you are eligible to test, you’ll be sent an Authorization to Test (ATA) by email within 4 weeks of applying. The ATA will open an almost-immediate 90-day test eligibility period. You must take the test in this 90-day period.

See www.oncc.org for details.
Preparing to take a certification test can be overwhelming. Where should you begin? What resources should you use? Do you need to obtain all the references listed in the Test Candidate Handbook to be successful? The question of which book should be used to prepare for certification is one that is frequently asked. Many people look for a single source to guide their preparation; but the nature of the test is that it is based on a body of knowledge. The test items reflect content from various sources. Some people become so overwhelmed that they do not get past this point. Don't let this be you! There are simple ways to break the anxiety barrier about what to study and move full steam into study mode. The materials you need to get started can be found on the ONCC website under Resources, but here there are a few common questions and their answers.

**Where do I start?** Start with the Test Content Outline. An outline is available for each certification exam. It lists the major topic areas that are on the test. It also provides the percentage of test items related to each topic. Make a list. Determine the topic areas you feel the least confident about and place those at the top of the list. Then rank the topics based on the percentage of the test they involve. Topics that comprise a larger percentage of the test and that you are less confident about should be the first areas you study.

**What books or study materials should I use?** Once you have identified the topic(s) that you will start with, go to the Reference List for the certification test. This can found in the Test Candidate Handbook and on the ONCC website. The test items are supported by these references. Each test item can be referenced to one or more of the reference materials. There is no “one” reference that addresses all of the topics on the Test Content Outline.

For example, look at the OCN® test references (right). The table below illustrates how each reference relates to the Test Content Outline to help you determine which references will be most useful to you. This chart is based on the chapter titles in each reference, not on the quantity of test items that correlate to each reference. The numbers on the chart correspond to the numbering of the references (right). The complete list with publishers can be found at http://www.oncc.org/files/2016_OCNReferences.pdf.

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continued on page 5
Rollin’ on the River: How One Chapter Celebrates Certification

Theresa M. Gannon, BSN, RN, OCN®

Creedence Clearwater Revival’s album, “Rollin’ on the River,” is playing in the background and Proud Mary comes to life on the water as the Southeast Minnesota ONS Chapter sets off for an adventure on the mighty Mississippi.

This cruise has become a staple on our calendars every June since 2000, and is a favorite among our 155 members. The event originated from a collaboration between Sherry Looker, BSN, RN, OCN®, who was program chair at the time, and a pharmaceutical representative. Sherry described it best when she said, “Every year is unique. It is an opportunity to network, say thank you, meet new faces, celebrate certification, and welcome new members.”

It’s also fun.

Chapter members and invited guests, all dressed in cruise wear, board a chartered bus at about 5:15pm in Rochester, where most chapter members are located. It is a great opportunity to relax after a full day’s work. We sing, get reacquainted, play trivia games, and win prizes. It’s a lively ride for the next 75 minutes.

When we arrive at our destination we are greeted by the La Crosse Queen, a beautiful authentic paddle-wheel boat that’s all ours for the next two hours. Oftentimes we meet up with members from areas outside of Rochester just in time for a group photo. Then it’s “All Aboard!”

A highlight of the evening is a pinning ceremony to recognize certified nurses. Chapter members who passed a certification test are presented with a credential pin. They are asked what certification means to them and how it will help them in their practice. It is a public reminder for those of us who are certified of how proud we are to have earned this achievement. It gives onlookers a goal to strive for. There is a lot of cheering, clapping, and cameras flashing as we record the moment.

As daylight begins to fade we scurry up to the top deck to take in the sights and sounds. As the day draws to a close, we are drawn closer as nurses, friends and comrades. The big paddle-boat turns and churns us back towards home, until next year.

ONCC Expands Employer Discount Program

After pilot testing an employer discount program in 2015 with employers of all sizes, ONCC is opening the program to more institutions in 2016. Certification Rewards enables institutions to earn points for supporting and recognizing certification of oncology nurses. These points translate into discounts off certification fees, ranging from 10% – 30%. Facilities that meet a benchmark for a specified number of applicants can earn an additional 10% discount.

The purpose of the program is to reward institutions for supporting certification, and to enlist employer participation in reducing barriers to certification. ONCC research has shown that cost can be a barrier to certification, especially among nurses who don’t feel confident about testing. This program requires participating employers to meet specific criteria for providing financial support. It does not require employers to guarantee a minimum number of certification applicants.

Two hundred nurses applied for certification through the program in 2015. Most employer participants qualified for discounts of 10% or 20%; one employer reached the 40% discount level. These employers will continue to receive these discounts in 2016. The savings can add up, depending on the level of support for certification and the number of certification candidates from an institution.

Interested in the program? Learn more at http://www.oncc.org/certificationrewards.
150 Nurses Receive Roberta Scofield Memorial Certification Awards

In the late 1990s, ONCC was a pioneer in assisting nurses in becoming certified. In 1997, ONCC announced the first Roberta Scofield Memorial Certification Awards. Named in honor of the organization’s first president, these awards provided recipients with a free registration for a certification test or renewal. Fifty nurses received the awards that first year. Since then more than 1,500 nurses have been selected for the award, including 150 nurses in 2016.

More than 350 nurses applied for the 2016 award. This year’s recipients include nurses representing 36 states in the US, as well as three additional countries. Here’s a look at the how the 2016 Scofield Award recipients will use their award, and the credentials they’ll be pursuing.

ONCC Participates in Value of Certification Meeting

Measuring the value of certified nurse practice is a strategic imperative for credentialing organizations, according to the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS). The group recently hosted the Spring 2016 Value Convening Meeting in Las Vegas to create a research agenda designed to gather the data needed to build a business case for certification. Much of the research that has been conducted thus far has focused on perceptions of certification.

Creating a business case for certification will help credentialing bodies effectively communicate the value of specialty certification to nurses, employers and patients. ONCC Board of Directors member Becky O’Shea RN, MSN, OCN®, AOCNS®, CBCN® and Executive Director Cyndi Miller Murphy, MSN, RN, CAE, participated in the meeting. The purpose of this convening was to:

- Identify areas for research that will build a business case for the value of certified practice.
- Explore the value of certification among members of multidisciplinary health care teams.
- Agree on research initiatives and determine concrete steps for implementation.
- Consider the availability of funding and data to conduct research.

By collaborating with other credentialing bodies, ONCC will advance research on specialty nursing certification—an essential component in measuring the value of certification in specific terms.

ONCC will share more information about the research agenda and specific research efforts as it becomes available.

What Should I Study  continued

Are these the only references I can use? What if the cost or availability of references is a problem for me? Remember, the test items are supported by the resources on the reference list, but that does not mean you cannot find comparable, accurate information in other resources. Keep in mind there is no one study method or reference that will guarantee success on the test.

When choosing study materials, choose references that best suit your needs. Your needs are based on your experiences, knowledge strengths and deficits, and also the formats of study materials. Do not be swayed by references that state “it is the only one you will need to be successful” or make promises of being all inclusive. You can look at each book’s chapter titles by going online to the ONS Store or other booksellers and “opening” each book. You can do it!
Nurse Employers Recognized for Oncology Certified Staff

Forty three institutions were recently recognized for having a majority of their RN staff certified in oncology nursing. Each of these organizations received an ONCC Employer Recognition Plaque. This plaque is available free-of-charge to any patient care setting where a majority (more than 50%) of professional nurses are ONCC-certified. To apply for a plaque, go to http://www.oncc.org/employer-recognition-plaque-order-form.

Congratulations to these organizations.

- Addison Gilbert Hospital at Lahey Health System, Gorton’s Center Oncology Infusion in Gloucester, MA
- Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Vince Lombardi Clinic in Green Bay, WI
- Baptist Health Lexington, Outpatient Infusion in Lexington, KY
- Baptist Health Lexington, Home Infusion in Lexington, KY
- Bassett Medical Center, Bassett Cancer Institute in Cooperstown, NY
- Catawba Valley Medical Center, Infusion Center in Hickory, NC
- Carolina Oncology Associates in Salisbury, NC
- Chilton Medical Center, Cancer Center in Pompton Plains, NJ
- Cone Health Cancer Center, Medical Oncology in High Point, NC
- Duke Raleigh Cancer Center in Raleigh, NC
- Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, Henry Cancer Center in Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Houston Methodist Hospital Cancer Center, Infusion Services (OPC 21) in Houston, TX
- IU Health Central Indiana Cancer Center East in Indianapolis, IN
- Karmanos Cancer Institute at McLaren Lapeer Region, Medical Oncology in Lapeer, MI
- Lash Group in Frisco, TX
- Lehigh Valley Health Network, LVPG Hematology Oncology in Allentown, PA
- Lehigh Valley Health Network, Medical Oncology MHC Satellite in Bethlehem, PA
- Martin Health System, Robert and Carol Weissman Cancer Center in Stuart, FL
- Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Brooklyn Infusion Center in Brooklyn, NY
- Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Rockville Centre Oncology Nurses in Rockville Centre, NY
- Methodist Hospital Estabrook Cancer Center, Infusion Center in Omaha NE
- Monmouth Medical Center, Oncology Day Stay in Long Branch, NJ
- National Jewish Health, Western Oncology Hematology in Golden, CO
- New Milford Hospital, Diebold Family Cancer Center in New Milford, CT
- Newport Hospital, Comprehensive Cancer Center in Newport, RI
- Pen Bay Blood Disorder and Cancer Center in Rockport, ME
- Riverview Medical Center, Oncology Day Stay in Red Bank, NJ
- Rush University Hospital, Rush Cancer Center- Lisle Campus in Lisle, IL
- Rush University Hospital, Rush Cancer Center-Oak Park in Oak Park, IL
- Rush University Hospital, Rush University Cancer Center in Chicago, IL
- Seattle Cancer Center Alliance, LTFU Telemedicine in Seattle, WA
- Southern Ohio Medical Center, Cancer Center in Portsmouth, OH
- St. Francis Hospital, Infusion Unit in East Hills, NY
- St. Joseph Regional Cancer Center in Lewiston, ID
- St. Jude Affiliate Clinic at NH Hemby Children’s Hospital in Charlotte, NC
- St. Marys Hospital Cancer Medicine, Medical Oncology/Radiation Oncology in Amsterdam, NY
- Stephenson Cancer Center, Gyn-Oncology in Oklahoma City, OK
- Texas Oncology Arlington South in Arlington, TX
- The Christ Hospital Health Network, Cancer Center in Cincinnati, OH
- Turville Bay Radiation Oncology Center in Madison, WI
- University Hospitals of Cleveland, Seidman Cancer Center at Landerbrook in Mayfield Heights, OH
- UPMC Cancer Centers, Arnold Palmer Pavilion in Mount Pleasant, PA

Are you connected with the oncology certified nurse community? Join Us!

facebook.com/oncologycertification twitter.com/oncc
Electronic Classroom continued

a challenge since the course inception. Nursing schedules are completed 6-8 weeks in advance, and staff need enough advance notice to request the day off. Nursing leadership also requires a minimum of 7 attendees to justify holding the class. Another obstacle is motivating nurses to attend on an unpaid work day. It is time to start thinking outside of the box!

Before a recent class, I suggested that we video record the presentations and link them to the slides. The presentations would then be added into our intranet system called LearningLink, where our hospital’s professional development content is located. This would allow nurses to access the class content on their own time, even at home, and self-pace their study.

CNE contact hours are also offered via the electronic format, one hour at a time, as long as participants complete the online evaluation. Once the classes are loaded, we’ll promote it via email, flyers, posters and staff meetings to let nurses know this exciting new option is available.

This innovative method solves the problems associated with scheduling constraints and pulling staff out of patient care on class days – always a nerve-wracking situation. The 24/7 access option makes it possible for nurses to study during down time at work or on their own time. The online format also makes the content sustainable in the event a presenter is not available for a future session.

Many institutions have experts within their fold who develop preparation courses or study groups for certification. But as the needs of the units and the staff change, institutions must find innovative ways to help nurses achieve their certification goals. Leveraging technology, like we have at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, is one way to do this. I look forward to reporting on the feedback from our staff in a future article!

Certified Nurse Numbers on the Rise

If you’re certified, you’re in good company—more than 36,000 of your peers are certified, too.

The number of oncology certified nurses can change often because of almost daily test administrations.

The OCN® credential has been the most sought-after credential throughout ONCC’s 30-year history of certification testing. Here’s a quick look at the number of nurses who are ONCC-certified as of April 14, 2016.

*Note: nurses may hold more than one credential

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ONCC Mission Statement
The mission of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation is to promote excellence in patient care and professional practice by validating specialized knowledge in oncology nursing and related specialties.

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