



## Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation

125 Enterprise Drive ■ Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1214

Toll Free: 877-769-6622 ■ Phone: 412-859-6104 ■ Fax: 412-859-6168

Email: [oncc@ons.org](mailto:oncc@ons.org) ■ [www.oncc.org](http://www.oncc.org)

---

### **ONCC Board Clarifies Nursing Practice Required for Certification and Recertification in Oncology Nursing**

The Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) has clarified the requirement for nursing practice for the purpose of certification and recertification. ONCC's eligibility criteria for certification and recertification have always required a nurse to have a minimum amount of nursing practice. As nurses have moved into non-traditional roles, it has become more difficult to determine which roles meet this criterion.

Earlier this year, the ONCC Board of Directors appointed a task force to explore this issue. The task force members included certified nurses who work in traditional and nontraditional roles, including representation from the Oncology Nursing Society's Pharmaceutical Industry Nurses Special Interest Group and other stakeholders. The task force recommended that nursing practice be defined for purposes of certification and recertification as working in a role that only a Registered Nurse can fill. This excludes roles that may be filled by nurses *OR* other professionals. The ONCC Board of Directors accepted this recommendation. Therefore:

**Only nurses who have attained the required practice hours in a role that must be filled by an RN and only an RN meet the practice criteria for certification or recertification.**

Several years ago, ONCC began offering a recertification option for certified nurses who do not have practice hours. This option (ONCC Option 3) requires a nurse to retake and pass the certification examination and earn professional development points (e.g. meet the ONCPRO requirements.) This option is for any certified nurse who does not meet the practice criteria for recertification. This would include, for example, nurses who are not working at all, those who work in specialties other than oncology or those employed in roles that do not require that an RN and only an RN fill the role.

However, Option 3 is not available to AOCN<sup>®</sup> and CPON<sup>®</sup> nurses because those certification examinations are no longer given. Regarding this issue, the task force recommended that ONCC conduct a focus group of certified nurses in nontraditional roles to seek ideas for other recertification methods for AOCN<sup>®</sup> and CPON<sup>®</sup> Certified nurses who do not meet the practice criteria. The focus group convened in May during the ONS Congress. The only suggestion from the focus group was to require more professional development hours for these nurses to recertify. ONCC also reviewed the recertification policies of other specialty nursing organizations and in particular, those organizations with certifications programs for which the examination is no longer administered. After careful consideration, the ONCC Board ultimately chose not to develop this option of requiring additional professional development because there is no evidence to support this as a substitute for clinical practice in contributing to or measuring competence. Therefore:

**The only recertification option for those who hold CPON<sup>®</sup> or AOCN<sup>®</sup> Certification is to meet the practice criteria and the ONCPRO requirements.**