Is It Certification, a Certificate Program, or a Certificate of Completion?

Be a Savvy Consumer and Know the Difference

Cyndi Miller Murphy, RN, MSN, CAE
ONCC Executive Director

The term “certification” is used a lot these days and doesn't always mean the same thing to everyone. Programs referred to as certifications by a variety of providers do not always represent the same level of achievement. For example, some providers label attendance at continuing education (CE) programs as “certification” and tell the participants that they may call themselves “certified” in a defined area of practice upon completion of the program. Those who have passed a comprehensive broad-based certification examination, such as the OCN® test, know that attendance at a weekend CE program does not represent the same level of achievement. Nurses, as consumers of these programs, need to understand what each type of program represents in order to make wise decisions about the programs in which they invest. Nurses often spend their own money to become certified or attend CE programs. Employers also invest in these programs. Both nurses and employers need to be able to assess programs so that they fully understand what they are consuming and do not misrepresent themselves or those they employ as "certified" when they are not.

This article describes the defining features of three types of programs: quality certification programs, assessment-based certificate programs, and CE programs that provide certificates of attendance.

(See “Certification,” page 6)

Renewing Your Certification in 2008?
You Could Do It for Free—for Life!

Five nurses will renew their certification for free this year and every time renewal is due. Certified nurses who are due to renew in 2008 and who renew through the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option (ONC-PRO) before June 15 will be entered to win a free certification renewal in 2008 and for the rest of their life.

To be eligible to win, candidates must be due to renew their certification in 2008 and submit the completed ONC-PRO application, ONC-PRO logs, and renewal fee by June 15. Five lucky winners will receive a refund of their 2008 fee, and the fee will be waived every time their future renewal is due. Those who are not selected to win the free renewal will still save $75 on the fee. Learn more at oncc.org/renewal/oncpro.shtml.
Editor's Message

Excitement Is in the Air!
Heather Mackey, RN, MSN, ANP, AOCN®

This spring promises to be an exciting time of year for oncology nursing, particularly concerning issues related to oncology nursing certification. Volunteers soon will begin field testing items for the Certified Breast Care Nurse Examination as the next step in the development of ONCC’s first subspecialty certification examination. With the annual ONS Congress just around the corner and all the up-to-the-minute educational topics to be offered, certified nurses can stop by the ONCC Certification Oasis for a relaxing massage and refreshments to provide a needed recharge for the day ahead. Take part in a quick survey on ONCC’s Certification News and other issues related to certification and possibly win a prize! We will celebrate Oncology Nurses Month, including all of our accomplishments as oncology certified nurses over the past year, and we will look forward to the announcement of the OCN® of the Year, Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year, Employer Recognition, and the Pearl Moore Certification Champion Award winners at the ONCC Recognition Breakfast for Oncology Certified Nurses.

Beginning with this issue, readers will notice a change in the appearance of the newsletter, starting with the name, Certification News. The editorial board of ONCC’s Certification News also is excited about the changes ahead for our newsletter. Beginning with this issue, readers will notice a change in the appearance of the newsletter, starting with the name, Certification News. The new name more accurately reflects the newsletter’s content. In our effort to ensure the production of newsletters that are informative and appealing to our readers, we will be making some aesthetic and formatting changes to Certification News as well. We will distribute a printed and mailed version for the summer and winter 2008 issues in an effort to increase accessibility and to reach those readers who have indicated that they prefer to receive Certification News in a print format. The print version will be printed on recycled paper using vegetable-based inks, in keeping with ONCC’s efforts to be environmentally conscious. Certification News also will continue in an electronic format, for those who prefer to receive it that way. Our intent is not to overload readers with information but rather provide them with much needed information in whichever manner is most readily accessible (and usable)! More information will follow in future issues of Certification News. In the meantime, please take time to enjoy this beautiful spring season and THANK YOU for all you do to support oncology nursing and oncology nursing certification!

New Pins Offer Way to Display Credentials

Certified nurses have a new way to display pride in their credential. ONCC is offering new credential pins for OCN®, CPON®, AOCNP®, and AOCNS®-certified nurses. Pins are available in four finishes: sterling silver or gold-filled and with either a burgundy enamel background or black enamel background. The pins cost just $34 each (plus shipping and handling, which varies upon the total order price). Pins can be ordered online at www.oncc.org or by calling ONCC at 877-769-6622. Not pictured but also available: CPON® pins and pins with a black enamel background. Pins will be available in May.
I n recent newsletter issues, we have highlighted a variety of ONCC volunteer roles and committees. In preparing for this issue, the editorial board shifted focus to explore a role within ONCC. What a better way to start than with the executive director, Cyndi Miller Murphy, RN, MSN, CAE.

Cyndi Miller Murphy began her ONCC career as the director of certification in 1989. As the organization grew, so did her role. She was promoted to deputy executive director, and when Pearl Moore, RN, MN, FAAN, previous executive director (ED), became the chief executive officer (CEO) of ONS, Murphy became the ED of ONCC. As ED, she oversees all of the day-to-day functions of ONCC, including the organizational policies, the operating budget, and managing the nine full-time staff members who perform the core work for ONCC. Murphy collaborates with the board on setting policy and mapping strategic direction and budgeting, including adherence to the budget. She is responsible for preparing status reports, business planning, and issuing papers for board review to help guide decision making. As the official spokesperson for ONCC, she reviews and approves all official ONCC communications. Murphy is also the official liaison to the testing company and other contract services, working with legal counsel to develop the contracts and monitor the companies’ compliance.

Murphy has a dual role providing management and leadership within the organizational structure of ONCC. As ED, she reports to Paula Rieger, RN, MSN, AOCN®, FAAN, the CEO of ONS, its affiliated organizations, and to the ONCC board of directors. ONCC is an independent organization that works closely with ONS and affiliates, including the ONS Foundation and APHON. ONCC has its own budget, staff, and policies that are managed by Murphy, who also is responsible for other organizational components such as contracting with ONS for support services in areas such as human resources, finance, information technology, and meeting services.

When asked about the best part of her job, Murphy states, “There are so many good parts! Working with so many talented and passionate nurses who volunteer for ONCC is wonderful.” Her role as ED has afforded her opportunities to meet and develop relationships with many outstanding individuals over the years. She feels honored to work with so many dedicated professionals. Murphy also expressed gratitude for having a fantastic, professional, and dedicated staff that takes pride in the work of the organization. She cites the privilege of observing oncology nursing develop over the past 20 years from a unique perspective. Each time ONCC completes a role delineation study for one of the programs, Murphy can see the evolution of the profession and the unique changes in cancer care. She cites the increase in the percentage of the content of the exam dedicated to survivorship issues over the past few years as one of the changes she has witnessed, which is very affirming. Murphy has been able to pursue her own professional development by developing and expanding her knowledge of association management and competency assessment through education, networking, and establishing contacts in the broad field of certification and standardized testing, which she continues to find a fascinating and challenging field. Murphy achieved certification in association management in 1997 from the American Society of Association Executives and maintains it through continuing education required every three years. This certification enables her to use the credential “CAE” (certified association executive) after her name and is a testament to her belief that “certification is very important in any professional role.”

As ED, Murphy networks with all of the other nursing specialty organizations and boards, primarily through the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS). ONCC also networks with the broader certification testing community through the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA). ONCC programs are accredited by the accrediting arms of both NOCA and ABNS.

(See “Murphy,” page 5)
Employer Spotlight

Columbia St. Mary’s Triples Number of Certified Nurses

Michael Smart, RN, BSN, OCN®

The cancer program at Columbia St. Mary’s (CSM) in Milwaukee, WI, deserves accolades for its pursuit of excellence in oncology nursing care and support of oncology nursing certification. As clinical director of oncology, Nancy Delzer, MSN, RN, AOCN®, BC-PCM, recognizes the value of certification in improving the confidence and competency of oncology nurses as well as helping to ensure the quality of care provided to patients with cancer. Under her leadership, enthusiasm for certification has spread throughout the CSM system, and the number of oncology nurses has reached record numbers, including 26 OCN®s and 4 advanced oncology certified nurses. This represents a threefold increase in the number of oncology certified nurses since Delzer became clinical director.

At CSM, an annual dinner held each May provides formal recognition of nurses who have achieved certification. CSM ensures other forms of professional achievement are recognized as well. Nurses who have completed the ONS Chemotherapy and Biotherapy course, a requirement to administer chemotherapy at CSM, as well as those who have presented at conferences or workshops, are commended for their contributions and achievements. Perhaps as importantly, the annual dinner serves as an opportunity for oncology nurses in the various CSM campuses to connect and collaborate with one another.

Additionally, to stimulate the development of oncology nurses, the CSM cancer program hosts a quarterly journal club in which oncology staff nurses prepare topics for discussion with the assistance of clinical nurse specialists. The journal club allows for discussion of real problems encountered in both inpatient and outpatient practice with a review of the current literature and practice recommendations.

When asked what areas of excellence make CSM stand out, Delzer talks about the dedication of nurses who have identified themselves as oncology nurses, and she takes great pride in CSM’s clinical nurse specialists who “are top in the country.” She “cannot say enough about them. They are dedicated to teaching both patients and staff. They have an exceptional clinical knowledge base and ability to connect with patients.” Delzer also points to an expectation of excellence and the inclusion of education as part of the organizational culture as keys to ensuring excellence, “We expect more from our oncology nurses in terms of required education.” Nurse managers ensure that staff are provided the time and support needed to pursue educational opportunities.

Congratulations to the nurses at the CSM cancer program on all of their accomplishments. Their commitment to excellence provides an example of what oncology nursing should be, and their success in tripling the number of oncology certified nurses is inspiring.

Add ONCC Activities to Your ONS Congress Schedule

Stop by the ONCC Certification Oasis in the Grand Hall of the Pennsylvania Convention Center where certified nurses can enjoy chair and hand massages, light refreshments, and a break from the hectic Congress schedule. Nurses who are not yet certified will find answers to their questions about certification. The Certification Oasis is supported in part by Lindi Skin and ONCC’s testing partner, Pearson VUE.

The ONCC Recognition Breakfast for Oncology Certified Nurses, supported by Merck and Co., Inc., will be held on Friday, May 16, at the Philadelphia Marriott from 6:30-8:15 am. Dave Balch, founder of The Patient/Partner Project, will present “You Can Handle More Than You Think You Can: Your Amazing Ability to Be Brave and Strong.” Although the event is full, certified nurses who were unable to reserve a ticket may show up and will be seated if space is available after all ticket holders have been seated.
Murphy (Continued from page 3)

Murphy states, “NOCA is very interesting because it represents certification across all occupations and professions from health care to engineers to crane operators and landscape architects, just to name a few.” ONCC has a presence at the ABNS and NOCA conferences, and Murphy often has the privilege of presenting. She is also an active participant in these organizations and has held numerous positions on the ABNS Board and Accreditation Council as well as the NOCA board and National Commission for Certifying Agencies. Murphy is currently the president of the NOCA board, thus leading by example when it comes to dedicating her time and talents to her professional organizations.

What’s the Latest With the CPON® Role Delineation Study?
Letty Valdiviez, MSN, RN, CPON®, Guest Contributor

In February, I had the privilege of being a part of a group of CPON®-certified nurses chosen by ONCC to serve on the 2008 Role Delineation Task Force. CPON®-certified nurses from across the country, representing various levels of practice, converged on the ONCC office in Pittsburgh, PA, to begin our work, which will continue over the next several months. Members of the task force include Christina Allegretti, CPNP, CPON®, Amy Eichenlaub, RN, CPON®, Heide Elliott, RN, CPON®, OCN®, Ruth Landers, MSN, RN, CPNP, CPON®, Laurie Linder, PhD, APRN, CPON®, Lynda Martinez-Carder, RN, BSN, CPON®, Maureen Sanders, RN, CPON®, Caryl Shelton, RN, CPON®, Stephanie Skinner, RN, CPON®, Jennifer Spencer, CPNP, CPON®, Leticia Valdiviez, MSN, RN, CPON®, Karla Wilson, RN, MSN, FNP, CPON®, Julia Youngblood, RN, BSN, CPON®, and Christine Yun, RN, MSN, PNP, CNS, CPON®.

The purpose of the task force is to define the areas of knowledge that are required for obtaining certification in pediatric oncology nursing, including the tasks that are pertinent for our role. The knowledge and task lists that were created reflect recent changes in practice, including an increased focus on hematology. The results of the Role Delineation Study will be used to form the CPON® Test Blueprint, which will be used as the basis for developing future versions of the CPON® examination.

In March, a pilot survey was distributed to selected nurses for testing. The final survey was sent to CPON®-certified nurses in April, via email, to gain their input about their pediatric oncology practice. We recognize that a large number of nurses interested in certification also care for patients from other specialties, especially hematology. For this reason, items in the survey reflect this trend.

ONCC is committed to developing a certification test that truly reflects our daily practice, so hearing from as many nurses as possible is important. The survey also has been made available to a sample of pediatric oncology nurses who have not yet pursued certification. If contacted, please take the time to complete the survey. Your opinion matters!

2008 ONCC Certification Test Dates and Application Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification Test Dates</th>
<th>First Application Deadline (Save $75)</th>
<th>Final Application Deadline (Full Fee)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>July 23, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOCNP® and AOCNS® Test Dates</td>
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<td>Year-round tests are available. Allow four to six weeks to receive an Authorization to Test.</td>
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Certification (Continued from page 1)

While each of these programs serves an important purpose, nurses need to know the differences in the intent of these programs and what completion of the program will mean for the individual. The National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA), a membership association for certifying organizations with an accreditation arm for certification programs, has published a document that defines the features of quality certification and assessment-based certificate programs. ONCC subscribes to these definitions.

Certification

NOCA defines professional certification as the voluntary process by which a non-governmental entity grants a time-limited recognition and use of a credential to an individual after verifying that he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria. Certification is the process by which individuals are assessed against predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies and designated as competent to perform a specific role. The primary purpose of certification is assessment (e.g., a multiple choice examination) that is independent of a specific course of study or educational provider. The assessment generally evaluates mastery of the knowledge and skills required to competently perform in a profession or occupation or to provide a specific service. Certification programs, because of their broad nature, are not tied to a specific course of study or an educational course, curriculum, or provider. Certification may be required for regulatory purposes or may have a significant impact on (or may be required for) hiring, promotion, and other employment-related outcomes. Examples of high-quality certification programs include all of the ONCC certifications (OCN®, CPON®, AOCNS®, AOCNP®) as well as many others that have received accreditation from the American Board of Nursing Specialties or the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

Assessment-Based Certificate Program

An assessment-based certificate program is a relatively short, non-degree granting program that provides instruction and training to aid participants in acquiring knowledge, skills, and competencies and designates that participants have passed an end-of-program assessment (test) derived from the course objectives. Assessment-based certificate programs typically cover a relatively narrow set of knowledge, skills, and competencies associated with fulfillment of a role, completion of a process, support of a product, provision of a service, or fulfillment of CE requirements. Although assessment is an integral part of the certificate program, the primary purpose is to provide instruction and training. Certificate programs generally are not required for regulatory purposes and do not have a significant impact on hiring, promotion, and other key employment outcomes. An example of a high-quality certificate program is ONS’s Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Course.

Certificate of Attendance or Participation

A certificate of attendance is issued after an individual attends or participates in an educational program. The certificate indicates only that the individual attended the program. Usually, knowledge at the end of the program is not assessed, although participants may be required to complete an evaluation of the program to obtain a certificate of completion. These certificates most often are used to document that an individual has attained CE in a specific content area.

In nursing, one way to judge the quality of a CE program is to determine whether the program is accredited or approved by an accredited approver. Accrediting bodies have set standards and criteria for quality CE programs, and only the programs that meet those standards and criteria receive accreditation. Only accredited CE programs meet the criteria for recertification through ONC-PRO. Nurses should be savvy consumers and determine if a CE program is accredited before attending the program. All CE programs provided by ONS and APHON are accredited nursing CE programs. Examples of high-quality CE programs are the annual ONS Congress and Institutes of Learning and the annual APHON conference.

In summary, nurses, employers, and others who may invest in certification, certificate programs, or CE should be wise consumers and understand the ramifications of the programs in which they invest. All three types of programs have an important role to play in the professional development of nurses. However, consumers should be sure that the providers of the programs are not misrepresenting the programs. Nurses also should be sure to represent themselves appropriately upon completion of a program.
## Comparison Between Certification Programs and Assessment-Based Certificate Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Assessment-Based</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A governing body, with representation from the certified population,</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>that is autonomous from other entities, is responsible for oversight of</td>
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<td>the certification program and oversees all decisions related to certi-</td>
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<td>fication activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The content (knowledge, skills, and competencies) of the assessment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>(test) leading to certification is identified through a formal role</td>
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<td>delineation study or practice analysis that employs the input of prac-</td>
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<td>titioners in the profession or specialty. The content primarily empha-</td>
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<tr>
<td>sizes professional practice and competencies. It is periodically up-</td>
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<td>dated through the role delineation process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The provider of a certification program conducts the program indepen-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>dently of any educational programs. Eligibility requirements for the</td>
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<tr>
<td>certification may include completion of educational courses or experi-</td>
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<td>ences, but the required education is not provided by the certification</td>
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<td>provider.</td>
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<td>4. The assessment is administered in a standardized manner in a secure,</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not required</td>
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<tr>
<td>proctored environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The assessment undergoes regular statistical psychometric analyses,</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>such as estimates of reliability and analysis of the test items to de-</td>
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<td>termine difficulty.</td>
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<td>6. The passing standard or score required to pass the test is estab-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>lished using a sound method that employs the judgment of stakeholders,</td>
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<tr>
<td>such as those who hold the credential and employers. The governing</td>
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<td>body for the certification program holds the authority to approve the</td>
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<td>passing score. Statistical methods are employed to ensure that the</td>
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<td>passing score remains constant across various forms of the assess-</td>
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<td>ment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. A quality certification is time-limited. To maintain the credential,</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>May or may not be</td>
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<tr>
<td>certificate holders are required to engage in specified activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>time-limited</td>
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<td>designed to measure or enhance continued knowledge and competency</td>
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<td>within the content of the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Those who have successfully completed the certification program are</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>awarded letters to use after their names to signify they have</td>
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<tr>
<td>obtained and maintained the credential.</td>
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<td>9. Certified individuals are subject to disciplinary policies, and the</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>credential can be revoked by the governing body for violation of the</td>
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<td>policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. An appeal process is in place for certification candidates and</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>certificate holders to appeal decisions made by the governing body</td>
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<td>regarding their certification status.</td>
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Employers Receive Plaques Recognizing Certified Staff

ONCC recently presented 31 plaques to institutions where a majority of the professional nurses (more than 50%) are oncology certified. ONCC presents these plaques free of charge to any patient care facility that meets the majority requirement. Congratulations to those who received plaques.

Alaska Native Medical Center, Oncology in Anchorage
Albany Internal Medicine Group, Albany Oncology & Infusion Clinic in Oregon
Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute, Martha Morehouse Plaza 11th Floor Infusion Center in Columbus, OH
Augusta Oncology Associates in Georgia
Capital Region Medical Center, Cancer Center in Jefferson City, MO
Centegra Health System, Sage Cancer Center in McHenry, IL
CentraState Medical Center, Inpatient Oncology in Freehold, NJ
Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center, Hematology/Oncology Outpatient Clinic in Seattle, WA
Christ Hospital and Medical Center, Outpatient Oncology in Oak Lawn, IL
Coburn Cancer Center, Cancer Research in St. Cloud, MN
Coburn Cancer Center, Medical Oncology in St. Cloud, MN
Coburn Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology in St. Cloud, MN
Community Cancer Care Specialists in Mt. Clemens, MI
Cumberland Oncology and Hematology in Oak Ridge, TN
Emory Healthcare–Winship Cancer Institute, Ambulatory Treatment Center in Atlanta
Good Samaritan Hospital, Drs. Hahn and Padgett in Baltimore, MD
Great Falls Clinic, Clinic Cancer Care in Montana
Greater Baltimore Medical Center Cancer Center, Lois Harvey Miller Infusion Therapy Center in Maryland
Jupiter Medical Center-Foshay Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology in Florida
Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, Oncology Department at Kaiser Medical Center in Richmond, CA
M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, TX
Medical Oncology Associates of Long Island, Nursing Department in Woodbury, NY
Miami Valley Hospital, Gyn-Oncology Center in Dayton, OH
Milford Regional Medical Center/Community Cancer Care in Massachusetts
New Bern Cancer Care in North Carolina
Penobscot Bay Medical Center, Cancer Care center in Rockport, ME
Providence Regional Cancer Partnership, Cancer Program in Everett, WA
Samaritan Medical Center, Radiation Oncology in Watertown, NY
St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, Oncology Medical Unit in Boise, ID
University Medical Center at Princeton in New Jersey
Washington Hematology-Oncology in Yakima

Readers Respond
Nurses Share Benefits of Volunteering

The winter issue of the ONCC News asked “How have you benefitted from volunteering?” The following is a sample of the responses received.

“Volunteering for various committee and board positions over the past decade within my local ONS chapter and other state nursing organizations has provided me with phenomenal collaborative and leadership opportunities that otherwise would have been denied to me in my current nursing capacity. Here, I have a safe place to hone leadership skills. Here, I can observe, learn, prepare, and perfect skills needed to be influential within nursing. Volunteering provides me with the opportunity to control my own destiny, both personal and professional, in numerous venues. I can exercise personal and professional rights and responsibilities. For me, having learned about policies and mechanisms in the process of volunteering, through organizational participation, has shortened my learning curve on how to influence the policy process at numerous levels of governance and government.”

-Susan Wozniak, RN, MS, OCN®
Detroit, MI

(See “Readers Respond,” page 10)
Nurses Volunteer as Advocates for Certification

Twenty-two certified nurses have recently become involved in promoting the value of certification by joining the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program (ONCAP). Members of ONCAP are certified nurse volunteers who encourage certification in their workplace, chapter, or community. ONCC welcomes these new program participants.

- Mary Barnett, RN, BSN, RNP®, CRNI, Orlando, FL
- Racheal Bingham, RN, BSN, CPON®, Humble, TX
- Susan Caramico, RN, BSN, OCN®, Las Vegas, NV
- Christine Cattoor, RN, OCN®, Plano, TX
- Shonda Clements, RN, BSN, OCN®, Midlothian, VA
- Heather Cruz, BSN, RN, OCN®, South Orange, NJ
- Eva Dilks, RN, BSN, OCN®, Norman, OK
- Regina Griffin, RN, OCN®, Troy, NY
- Cheryl Lee Hancock, RN, MA, CHPN, OCN®, Rockville, MD
- Melissa Hines, RN, BSN, CPON®, Seattle, WA
- Wanda Jo Johnson, MA, RN, BSN, OCN®, Boise, ID
- Mary Pat Johnston, RN, MS, AOCN®, Waukesha, WI
- Margaret Jones, RN, OCN®, Ludlow Falls, OH
- Corrine Keen, RN, MS, OCN®, Middletown, MD
- Cassandra Knuth, RN, OCN®, Minneapolis, MN
- Joan Moore, RN, MN, APRN, AOCN®, New Haven, CT
- Bonnie Raelhofer, RN, OCN®, McHenry, IL
- Elizabeth Raucci, RN, MSN, MHA, CNS, OCN®, Norwalk, CT
- Marlene Reidl, RN, CPON®, Bristol, RI
- Janelle Tipton, MSN, RN, AOCN®, Toledo, OH
- Margaret Wagnerowski, MSN, RN, OCN®, AOCNS®, Huntington, WV
- Nancy Winne, RN, OCN®, Raleigh, NC

Find links to the Advocates program application form and a complete list of Advocates by state at http://www.oncc.org/support/advocatesProgram.shtml

Practice Round

“Practice Round” offers sample items from ONCC practice tests. The following items were taken from the free OCN® Practice Test available at www.oncc.org/PracticeTests/default.aspx. The answer, rationale, and reference for each item is included. Please note that these items do not appear on current OCN® examinations; they were written for previous tests that no longer are in use. Because the items are older, the references cited may have been replaced by recent versions. When preparing for an ONCC certification examination, candidates should use current test blueprints and reference lists. Although the practice items demonstrate the format of ONCC test items, they are not intended to be study materials. Web-based practice tests can be purchased at www.oncc.org/getcertified/practicetests.shtml. Free Web-based practice tests are also available for each ONCC examination.

1. A good general measure of mental status involves the patient’s ability to
   a. Perform serial addition to 100.
   b. Recall his or her children’s ages and births.
   c. Repeat his or her spouse’s name five more times within 30 seconds.
   d. Respond to commands involving multiple functions.

2. The severe pain associated with post-herpetic neuropathy would be most effectively treated by which of the following medications?
   a. Propoxyphene.
   b. Hydromorphone.
   c. Amitriptyline.
   d. Extra strength acetaminophen.

Answers

1. d. Rationale: To determine how well a patient is functioning, a mental status assessment should be performed. Assessment should include affect, behavior, memory, concentration, and reasoning. Assessment of a higher level function involves performing multiple function tasks.


2. c. Rationale: Pain associated with herpes zoster is severe and can be debilitating. The pain is described as continuous, deep, and burning. Opioids are used to treat acute herpes zoster. Tricyclic antidepressants are used to treat post-herpetic neuralgia.

Volunteers to Field Test Certified Breast Care Nurse Items

ONCC will conduct a field test of items developed for the Certified Breast Care Nurse (CBCN) Examination on May 14, prior to the start of the annual ONS Congress in Philadelphia, PA. The purpose of the field test is to measure the statistical performance of test items that have been developed, prior to their inclusion on an actual CBCN Examination.

ONCC hosted the first item-writing workshop for the CBCN Examination on February 22-24. Twenty-one nurses participated in the three-day program. After learning the techniques for developing sound test items, workshop participants put their skills to work and developed 200 items during the weekend.

CBCN item writers include Tara Stevenson Baney, RN, MS, AOCN®, Cynthia J. Briola, RN, OCN®, Dennis K. DeLong, RN, BSN, OCN®, Sharon S. Gentry, RN, MSN, AOCN®, Lucy M. Hertel, RN, BSN, OCN®, Marilyn H. Jiggitts, RN, MSN, Joy A. Knox, MSN, RN, ARNP, Cheryl A. Krawchuk, RN, BSN, OCN®, Cheryl L. Lacasse, RN, MS, OCN®, Victoria W. Loerzel, PhD, RN, OCN®, Michele L. Logan, RN, BSN, CHPN, Jean M. Lynn, MPH, RN, OCN®, Carole H. Martz, RN, MS, AOCN®, Nall, RN, MS, CNS, OCN®, Anna C. Purdy, RN, MSN, APRN-BC, Barbara B. Rogers, RN, CRNP, MN, AOCN®, Jean M. Rosiak, RN, MSN, AOCNP®, Lilie D. Shockney, RN, BS, MAS, Robin S. Stevens, RN, OCN®, Debra K. Swan, RN, MA, APRN-BC, AOCN®, and Debra L. Waugh, RN, OCN®. The first administration of the CBCN test will be offered January 2009. To be eligible to take the test, nurses must have a

- Current, active, and unrestricted RN license at the time of application and examination
- Minimum of one year (12 months) of experience as an RN within the three years (36 months) prior to application
- Minimum of 1,000 hours of breast care practice within the two and one-half years (30 months) prior to application
- Completion of a minimum of 10 contact hours of continuing education in breast care nursing within the three years (36 months) prior to application.

For more information about the CBCN examination, visit http://www.oncc.org/getcertified/testinformation/breast-care/index.shtml

Readers Respond (Continued from page 8)

“I am the Manager of the Community Health Outreach and Education program for Christiansa Care Health System-Helen F. Graham Cancer Center, Newark, DE. Through our department, we provide access to community based screenings such as cancer screening assessment. I am always grateful for the volunteer oncology nurses and student nurses who assist us at our events to provide education and information about health topics and to promote early detection. Each year, we have been fortunate to have volunteers assist at our Men’s Health and Cancer Conference held in April and our Skin Cancer Screenings in May. Usually, all are so happy to help and are glad they did!”

-Nora C. Katurakes, RN, MSN, OCN®
Newark, DE

Question for next issue: What is one thing you would like to know about ONCC?
Send your response to oncc@ons.org.
Please include “Reader’s Respond” in your subject line.

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The mission of the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation is to promote and provide oncology nursing certification for the enhancement of patient care and professional practice.

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