Recognizing Excellence Among Oncology Certified Nurses

Mark Flitcraft, RN, BSN, OCN®

One of the highlights of the 2006 ONCC Recognition Breakfast, which was held in conjunction with the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) 31st Annual Congress in Boston, MA, was the announcement of this year’s recipients of the Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year, OCN® of the Year, and Employer Recognition awards. Each of the award winners exemplifies excellence in oncology nursing and a strong commitment to the support and promotion of oncology nursing certification.

The recognition of Carol Brueggen, RN, MS, AOCNS, APRN-BC, as the 2006 Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year is a testament to her leadership role in the oncology nursing field. Brueggen is an oncology clinical nurse specialist at St. Mary’s Hospital and an assistant professor of nursing in the College of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic, both in Rochester, MN. She is a frequent lecturer on a variety of topics pertaining to oncology nursing, including chemotherapy administration safety and standards of care, ethics of nursing, and treatment-related issues. A published author, Brueggen has contributed to the literature on diverse cancer topics, including a two-part publication in the Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing on mesothelioma, psychosocial needs in clinical care, and a wide assortment of patient education resources.

After being selected as the recipient of the award, Brueggen said, “I work with many dedicated oncology nurses, both in leadership and in staff nurse roles, who put the needs of the patient first on a daily basis and believe that caring is the essence of nursing. Together, we ensure that cancer patients and their families receive quality cancer care and travel this journey in an atmosphere of caring and hope.” Her statement reveals the vision of a dedicated professional who sees the diagnosis of cancer as a journey. Like so many journeys in life, the trip itself often is more valuable than the destination.

Sherry Looker, RN, BSN, OCN®, received the 2006 OCN® of the Year Award in recognition of her contributions to the oncology nursing profession and her dedication to promoting oncology nursing certification. Looker is a nursing supervisor in medical oncology on the Cancer Treatment Unit at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, where she exemplifies professionalism among certified oncology nurses. She wears a variety of hats in her professional role as educator for patients and their loved ones, serving as a mentor and resource to nurses on local and national levels and as a representative of her ONS chapter. Looker implemented an annual recognition event for oncology certified members of the Southeast Minnesota ONS Chapter, which includes presentation of pins to certified members. She has written articles on the importance of certification while serving as newsletter editor for her chapter. Looker presents at OCN® review courses and delivers

(See “Breakfast,” page 6)
President's Message

Celebrate!

Patricia Baldwin, RN, MS, OCN®

In 1980, Kool and the Gang’s song Celebration reached the Top 10 on the music charts. For those of you who are as well seasoned as I am, I imagine that the energy and pulsing rhythm of that song brought you to your feet then and most likely still do. The song has become a favorite “Golden Oldie” and is enjoyed by those of all ages. I’m stretching it a bit when I say that ONCC used the inspiration provided in these lyrics

Celebration, let’s all celebrate and have a good time.
Celebration, we gonna celebrate and have a good time.

Please join ONCC in celebrating 20 years of oncology nursing certification.
Let’s keep the celebratory mood in motion. Celebrate the accomplishments of yourself and your peers. Honor the vibrant spirit that runs like a thread through our collective professional lives.

Deadline for Points Renewal is Approaching

Calling all OCN®, CPON®, and AOCN®s whose certification will expire on December 31, 2006: If you meet all of the eligibility criteria, you may choose to renew your oncology credential with the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option (ONC-PRO), rather than retesting. In addition, you can save $75 by submitting your renewal application and ONC-PRO logs by September 15, 2006. The final application deadline, which requires payment of the full, nondiscounted fee, is October 15, 2006. All eligibility criteria must be met at the time of application. Candidates using ONC-PRO may count points accrued from January 1, 2002, provided that the points were not submitted for a previous renewal by ONC-PRO. All ONC-PRO points for 2006 renewal must be accrued by October 15, 2006. More information about renewal by ONC-PRO, including electronic logs, which can be created, saved, updated, and submitted online, is available at www.oncc.org/renewal/oncpro.shtml.
Board Treasurer Reveals Benefits of Volunteering

Janice Nuhiwa, RN, MSN, CPON®

ONCC recently placed a call for nominees for two positions on the ONCC Board of Directors that will be open for election in November 2006. One position is open to OCN® certified nurses, and one is open to AOCN®, AOCP, or AOCNS certified nurses. Certified nurses who are dedicated to the mission and vision of ONCC will be slated for the positions, and all ONCC certified nurses will have the privilege of voting to select new leaders.

You might wonder why a certified nurse, who is likely to be busy with work, family, school, and community responsibilities, would volunteer to serve on the Board. Participation on the Board of Directors brings great opportunities to network with like-minded individuals and to impact the future of oncology certification.

Vicki J. Norton, RN, BSN, OCN®, recently started her term as secretary/treasurer of the Board. Norton recalls the ease of submitting the required Board nomination forms. She says, “It was easy enough. I had to write my vision for ONCC, how I hoped to contribute, and then get references.” She fondly describes her experience on the Board as an ongoing learning process. Norton expresses gratitude for learning the intricacies of the certification process, specifically how certification examinations are written and administered. “I’m learning the importance of support and research in certification, and how ONCC—as a nonprofit organization—works,” she says.

ONCC Board membership has afforded Norton the opportunity to be the liaison to the American Board of Nursing Specialties, which allows her to learn about other nursing certification organizations. In June 2006, Norton took office as the ONCC secretary/treasurer. After one year of service on the Board, Norton was encouraged to run for secretary/treasurer by the ONCC Nominating Committee based on her experience in the realm of management, specifically managing financial reports and budget issues.

Board members are required to participate in meetings, which are scheduled three to four times per year, and conference calls between meetings. ONCC covers the cost of travel for required meetings. All Board members also serve as liaisons to the various ONCC committees and agree to hold an office at some point during their terms. When asked for encouraging words for certified nurses who are considering applying for a Board or other volunteer position, Norton says, “Go for it. You won’t regret it. I applied out of my passion for oncology certification without a lot of previous involvement nationally. So don’t think that you don’t have a chance of being selected.” An added incentive: Board service, like many other volunteer positions in ONCC, can be converted into volunteer service for certification renewal through the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option.

For information about ONCC examinations, including dates and locations, deadlines, review courses, and practice tests, visit www.oncc.org and click “Get Certified.”

ONCC Moves to Online Voting

ONCC will introduce a new Web-based voting process when it conducts its next Board of Directors election this fall. The ONCC Board of Directors has selected Survey and Ballot Systems, Inc. (SBS), as the election administrator. Certified nurses who also are members of the Oncology Nursing Society may be familiar with the company, which has administered the Society’s elections for several years.

When the voting period begins (on or about November 1, 2006), certified nurses who have a valid e-mail address in the ONCC database will receive an e-mail from SBS with specific information and a link to a personalized Web-based ballot. Certified nurses will use an assigned passcode to authenticate their eligibility to vote. When voters access the Web ballot, the system’s user-friendly interfaces will enable them to easily navigate to and from candidate biographies and other pages of the site. Voters will be able to submit a vote or save a ballot to complete later.

Various system safeguards will prevent voters from casting more than one vote or submitting an invalid ballot. Voters will receive e-mail confirmation after submitting a ballot.

Certified nurses who do not have a valid e-mail address in the ONCC database will receive a letter from SBS containing the information and instructions necessary to cast their votes on the Web-based ballot. By using an assigned passcode, certified nurses will be able to access their personalized ballots from any computer with Internet access. Because of the widespread availability of computers with Internet access, paper ballots will not be printed or mailed to certified nurses.

The Web-based election is expected to offer certified nurses an easy and convenient voting method and provide ONCC with a secure, auditable election process. In addition, the Web-based election will save ONCC thousands of dollars in printing and postage expenses.

Watch your e-mail for your opportunity to vote this fall.
Certification May Apply to License Renewal Requirements

Some state boards of nursing require RNs to complete a minimum amount of nursing continuing education (CE) for license renewal. In some of those states, attaining or renewing specialty certification may be accepted in lieu of all or part of the CE requirement.

Because the requirements vary widely among state boards of nursing, certified nurses are encouraged to contact their state boards for details and specific requirements. Table 1 lists states that may accept oncology nursing certification in lieu of CE required for nursing license renewal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Web Site</th>
<th>Contact Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td><a href="http://www.state.ar.us/nurse">www.state.ar.us/nurse</a></td>
<td>Phone: 501-686-2700 Fax: 501-686-2714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rn.ca.gov">www.rn.ca.gov</a></td>
<td>Phone: 916-322-3350 Fax: 916-574-8637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td><a href="http://www.professionallicensings.state.de.us/nursing/index.shtml">www.professionallicensings.state.de.us/nursing/index.shtml</a></td>
<td>Phone: 302-739-4522 Fax: 302-739-2711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kbn.ky.gov">www.kbn.ky.gov</a></td>
<td>Phone: 502-429-3300 Fax: 502-429-3311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lsbpne.com">www.lsbpne.com</a></td>
<td>Phone: 504-838-5791 Fax: 504-838-5279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td><a href="http://www.michigan.gov/healthlicense">www.michigan.gov/healthlicense</a></td>
<td>Phone: 517-335-0918 Fax: 517-373-2179</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nursingboard.state.mn.us">www.nursingboard.state.mn.us</a></td>
<td>Phone: 612-617-2270 Fax: 612-617-2190</td>
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<td>Nebraska</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/crl/nursing/nursingindex.htm">www.hhs.state.ne.us/crl/nursing/nursingindex.htm</a></td>
<td>Phone: 402-471-4376 Fax: 402-471-1066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td><a href="http://www.state.nh.us/nursing">www.state.nh.us/nursing</a></td>
<td>Phone: 603-271-2323 Fax: 603-271-6605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td><a href="http://www.state.nm.us/clients/nursing">www.state.nm.us/clients/nursing</a></td>
<td>Phone: 505-841-8340 Fax: 505-841-8347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncbon.com">www.ncbon.com</a></td>
<td>Phone: 919-782-3211 Fax: 919-781-9461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td><a href="http://www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/nursing">www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/nursing</a></td>
<td>Phone: 803-896-4550 Fax: 803-896-4525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tennessee.gov/health">www.tennessee.gov/health</a></td>
<td>Phone: 615-532-5166 Fax: 615-741-7899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bne.state.tx.us">www.bne.state.tx.us</a></td>
<td>Phone: 512-305-7400 Fax: 512-305-7401</td>
</tr>
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Nurses Sign on as Advocates

Twenty-three nurses recently joined the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program, bringing the number of advocates to almost 500. Advocates are certified nurses who volunteer to promote the benefits of certification in their workplaces and communities. A complete list of advocates is available at www.oncc.org/support/advocatesProgram.shtml. The program welcomes:

- Kathleen Castro, Oak Hill, VA
- Shannon Chastain, Hebron, KY
- Melissa Cienin, Ballwin, MO
- Amy Corey, Indianapolis, IN
- Cathleen DeFrance, Newark, DE
- Melissa DeGuzman, Pacifica, CA
- Susan Drossulis, Sparks, NV
- Tammy Grom, Plattsburgh, NY
- Kara Lamb, Lynchburg, VA
- Peggy Lyons, Mebane, NC
- Deory Meliza, Houston, TX
- Debra Miller, Covington, LA
- Maryjo Osowski, LaGrange Park, IL
- Diane Paolilli, Poughkeepsie, NY
- Janice Reynolds, Brunswick, ME
- Precious Rivera, Palo Alto, CA
- Laura Sibley, Gainesville, FL
- Michael Smart, Huntsville, AL
- Christy Stout, Johnson City, TN
- Patricia Tawbush, Trafford, AL

Relax-ahhh-tion at the Oasis

Oncology certified nurses and those interested in certification took a break from the busy schedule of the 31st Annual Oncology Nursing Society Congress in historic Boston, MA, by visiting the ONCC Certification Oasis. 2006 is the second year that ONCC provided a getaway for certified nurses attending Congress. Visitors enjoyed refreshing beverages, snacks, and chair massages, which helped to ease tired muscles and provided a recharge for those who work so hard taking care of others.

The Oasis was supported by Thomson Prometric, Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, and the Catevo Group.
It’s Challenging! It’s Exciting! It’s Rewarding!
A Guide to Conducting a Certification Review Course

Michele E. Gaguski, RN, MSN, AOCN®, APN-C
Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist
Ocean Medical Center, Brick, NJ

We remember all too well studying biology, anatomy, and physiology in our basic nursing programs. Recalling the bones, electrons, and protons and the complex electrophysiology of the heart provided us a challenge on our path to achieving our nursing degrees. Like myself as a student, many of you may have formed study groups, developed flash cards, and shared tips for remembering all that material when preparing for big final examinations. Preparation for an oncology nursing certification examination is not much different.

In today’s demanding healthcare environment, oncology nurses are challenged to find the time to study for what may be their first test since completing their nursing degrees. Nurses who currently are certified are in a unique position to act as coaches, mentors, and teachers for other nurses who want guidance in preparing for such an examination. So you find yourself answering the call and begin to ask yourself, “Where should I begin?”

The most important aspect of developing a course or study group is to follow the most recent edition of the test blueprint found in the ONCC Test Bulletin. The blueprint outlines the focus areas of study that will be included on the certification test. It serves as a foundation for developing the core outline of your course content. For example, quality of life (36%) currently is the largest component on the OCN® test blueprint. So when planning your review course, you would be sensible to allow adequate time for covering that topic.

Try to be creative in the delivery of your content, and, if time permits, keep the learning fun and interactive. Ask review questions, play games, and spark competitiveness by placing groups of nurses on teams and awarding prizes for those who answer the most questions correctly. Adult learners like to have fun and be part of the learning process. You still can incorporate the core content areas and have fun in the process.

Include study tips and tools for participants to encourage them to refer back to the suggestions as they continue along their study path toward certification. You should state that your course does not guarantee successful completion of the examination but that it is intended to serve as a supplement to participants’ independent study time.

Another essential part of course development is timing. How long do you have to teach the course? Will it have one instructor or many? Will the course be held on or off site? For many staff members, courses at their institution may prove beneficial because it may fit better with their work schedules.

Another essential to course success is finding nurses who want to teach this type of course. Motivated speakers who are knowledgeable in the content areas, promote certification, and value its significance will contribute to the success of your course.

Marketing also is a major facet of course development. Who do you want to participate in the course? Just nurses from your own institution, or do you intend to offer the course to your local region, such as your Oncology Nursing Society chapter members? If you are just starting out, staying within the walls of your own institution may be beneficial. Doing so allows you time to learn how to implement a course and to reflect on the evaluations from your own nurses. You can consider the lessons learned, find areas for improvement, and view the entire educational process for the positives and negatives. Remember, feedback from your audience affords you the opportunity to improve your teaching and coordinating skills, which will enhance your next program offering.

Networking with other oncology nurses who have already engaged in such a process may help you get your course started. They may share success stories or things that have not worked for them. They may refer possible speakers or offer samples of their brochures or templates of their course outlines. Most often, the networking process offers time for questions and answers and serves as a support system to let you know that you are not alone in your quest to guide other nurses in the process of obtaining oncology nursing certification. A list of course contacts is available at http://www.oncc.org/getcertified/reviewcourses.shtml.

Finally, being passionate about certification is, by far, one of the most vital parts of pulling together a successful review course. Passion combined with time, energy, knowledge, and motivation will lead you on the way to success and a feeling of pride that you were able to teach and mentor nurses along the road to oncology nursing certification. With this approach, we further support that certification does make a difference!

Bibliography

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Ocean Medical Center, Brick, NJ
Recognition

(Continued from page 1)

ers small recognition gifts and handwritten notes to fellow chapter members in celebration of Oncology Nurses Month. She has increased awareness of oncology nursing in her community by successfully lobbying her city mayor to proclaim May Oncology Nurses Month.

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Orlando in Florida was recognized with the 2006 Employer Recognition Award for its dedication and commitment to oncology nursing certification. To encourage certification, the institution requires or prefers certification for oncology nursing positions, incorporates certification into job descriptions, and highlights certification in advertisements for nursing positions. It provides fee reimbursement for those who attain or renew certification and provides a lump sum cash award to nurses who obtain oncology certification. M.D. Anderson offers a Professional Practice Recognition Program, in which oncology certified nurses earn points for holding specialty certification, which counts toward increases in hourly wages. The center also encourages certified nurses to serve as mentors to those studying for certification examinations. Both those who mentor nurses and those who obtain certification are rewarded upon attainment of a credential. Oncology certified nurses participate in an annual recognition breakfast and have their names displayed on a plaque recognizing specialty certification on the “Wall of Distinction” in the hospital’s main lobby. Finally, M.D. Anderson Orlando supports the local ONS chapter’s OCN® review course by providing facilities, continuing nursing education contact hours, and financial support. It also provides paid time off for its nurses to participate in professional activities with ONCC and ONS. At present, about 75% of the eligible nurses at M.D. Anderson Orlando are certified by ONCC, and the goal is 100% by 2007. No doubt, it is well on its way to achieving that goal.

Congratulations to the award winners, and thank you for all that you do to support and promote oncology nursing certification. To read more about the winners, visit www.oncc.org/awards/2006AR.shtml.

Breakfast

(Continued from page 1)

Test Development Committee Chair Kristin Stegenga, RN, PCNS, MSN, CPON®. Baldwin also presented the 2006 ONCC award winners, including Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year Carol Brueggen, RN, MS, AOCNS, APRN-BC; OCN® of the Year Sherry Looker, RN, BSN, OCN®, and the Employer Recognition Award to the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Orlando in Florida. Read more about the outstanding achievements in “Recognizing Excellence Among Oncology Certified Nurses,” which begins on page 1.
Employers Are Recognized for Certified Nursing Staff

From March–May 2006, ONCC awarded 44 recognition plaques to institutions where the majority of professional oncology nurses is certified by ONCC. The plaques are available free of charge to any patient care setting that meets the majority requirement (more than 50%). Congratulations to all those that received plaques. To apply for a plaque for your institution, or to update a certificate on an existing plaque, visit the ONCC Web site at www.oncc.org or contact ONCC at 877-769-6622 or oncc@ons.org.

Green Bay Oncology, Ltd., in Wisconsin
Hematology Oncology Associates of the Quad Cities in Bettendorf, IA
Hematology Oncology Practice of Southside Virginia in South Boston
Henry Ford Health System, Josephine Ford Cancer Center Downriver, in Brownstown, MI
Highline Cancer Center, Oncology Infusion, in Burien, WA
Horizon Oncology Center in Lafayette, IN
Huntsman Cancer Hospital, Radiation Oncology, in Salt Lake City, UT
Intermed Oncology in Homewood, IL
James Graham Brown Cancer Center, Medical Oncology, in Louisville, KY
John D. Cronin Cancer Center in Lexington, KY
Marlborough Hospital, Hematology Oncology Outpatient Service, in Massachusetts
Marshall Clinic of Central Heart Hospital, Regional Cancer Center, in Eau Claire, WI
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, Clinical Research, in Baton Rouge, LA
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology, in Baton Rouge, LA
Methodist Hospitals, Radiation Oncology, in Gary, IN
Mount Auburn Hospital, Hematology Oncology/Radiation Oncology, in Cambridge, MA
Naillt Institute for Cancer and Blood Related Diseases, Staten Island University Hospital, Ambulatory Oncology, in New York
Nevada Cancer Center, Chemotherapy Department, in Las Vegas
New Hanover Radiation Oncology Center in Wilmington, NC
Northern Michigan Hematology Oncology, Ambulatory Infusion Center, in Petoskey
Northside Hospital, Outpatient Infusion Center, in Atlanta
Porter Hospital, 2 South Oncology, in Denver, CO
Provena St. Mary’s Regional Cancer Center in Bourbonnais, IL
Regions Hospital, Cancer Care Center, in St. Paul, MN
Rocky Mountain Cancer Center, Aurora Clinic, in Colorado
Rocky Mountain Cancer Center in Colorado Springs, CO
Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Center, in Spokane, WA
Scripps Green Hospital, Blood and Marrow Transplantation Unit, in La Jolla, CA
Spectrum Health Reed City Campus, Oncology Services Department, in Michigan
St. Anne’s Hospital, Radiation Oncology, in Fall River, MA
St. John’s Medical Center, Oncology Department, in Jackson, WY
St. Louis University Hospital, 8 North, in Missouri
Texas Oncology in Irving
Vince Lombardi Cancer Clinic in Stiger, WY
Winthrop University Hospital, Cancer Center for Kids, in Mineola, NY

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Nominating
JoAnn Coleman, RN, MS, AOCN®, ACNP
OCN® Test Development
Tamara G. Barnes, RN, MSN, OCN®, AOCN®

ONCC Mission Statement
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.

The Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation was established for the development, administration, and evaluation of a program for certification in oncology nursing. Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation, 125 Enterprise Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1214 (877-769-ONCC or 412-859-6104, phone: 412-859-6168, fax; oncc@ons.org, e-mail; www.oncc.org, Web site)

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Readers Respond

What Type of Certification Review Course Do You Prefer?

ONCC does not provide certification review courses. However, the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), ONS chapters, and other independent providers do offer courses.

Some review courses are available in traditional lecture style, whereas others are available online or in self-study modules.

Tell ONCC which format you prefer. E-mail your response to ONCC News at oncc@ons.org or fax it to 412-859-6168.