The word “fraud” most often brings to mind ill-gotten gains, financial wrong-doing, and headlines from evening news. Although it’s less common in nursing, fraud can and does take place, sometimes in the form of an unauthorized individual using a certification credential. For example, if a nurse does not hold current ONCC certification, it is fraudulent to use the corresponding credential.

If this type of fraud isn’t widespread, does it affect you or the credential you hold? Can anything be done to prevent or stop it? Yes.

To protect the integrity of its credentials, ONCC thoroughly investigates all reports of fraudulent use of a credential. In the event that ONCC has definitive evidence that an individual has fraudulently used a credential, ONCC will take action, including sanctions against the nurse and reporting the fraud to the individual’s state licensing board, employer, and others, which could include legal action. Information about ONCC’s policy on the fraudulent use of a credential can be found on the ONCC Web site at www.oncc.org/About/Policies.

How can you know if a nurse is ONCC certified? Don’t rely on your instincts or someone’s word—verify. ONCC offers free online credential verification at www.oncc.org. Anyone, including individual nurses, employers, physicians, or consumers, can check the certification status of a nurse. After a simple log-in procedure, the user enters a minimum of a nurse’s last name and first initial. Optional information such as city and state can narrow the search results. If a nurse is currently certified, the credential and expiration date will be included in the search results. If the results don’t confirm that a nurse who claims to be certified holds a current credential, contact ONCC.

Certified nurses have an important role in maintaining the integrity of their credential by verifying the certification status of other nurses when necessary and reporting suspected fraudulent use of a credential to ONCC promptly.

More Test Dates Coming in 2012

Beginning in January 2012, ONCC will offer longer testing windows for the OCN®, CBCN®, and CPHON® tests. These expanded test dates will provide options for testing nearly year-round. What will expanded testing windows mean for candidates?

- More options for choosing a test date
- Greater flexibility in testing on a date that fits the candidate’s schedule
- Convenient options for rescheduling a test appointment within the test window, if the need arises

2012 test windows will include February–March, April–June, July–September, and October–December. Watch for test application deadline dates in the 2012 Oncology Nursing Certification Test Bulletin, available in September 2011, or check the ONCC Web site this fall at www.oncc.org.
As 2011 moves forward and the seasons change, remember that it is always the season for certification. Five certification examinations are available throughout the year. These include the OCN®, AOCNS®, AOCNP®, CBCN®, and our newest examination, CPHON®. ONCC is very proud to be celebrating 25 years of oncology nursing certification. At the ONS Congress this year, we celebrated by honoring all oncology certified nurses and especially the hundreds of nurses who have volunteered throughout the past 25 years to ensure that our certifications are the best they can be. We hope that you enjoyed participating in our celebration. Over the past 25 years, more than 31,000 nurses have become oncology certified, sharing a common goal not only to grow professionally but also to validate their specialized knowledge and demonstrate their commitment to oncology patient care.

It is with this commitment to patient care that I would like to discuss an issue that we all face in health care—ethical dilemmas. As the ONCC Board of Directors strategically sets its agenda, one question is always part of our decision-making process. What are the ethical implications of our decisions?

You may wonder about the nature of the ethical dilemmas the Board might face. While there are often ethical issues related to almost any decision, one in particular comes to mind that occurred over the past year. The ONCC Board faced a year of difficult decisions as we worked through the issues related to the AOCNS® and AOCNP® examinations during 2010. As the year progressed and more candidates took the advanced examinations, it became apparent that the passing rates were much lower than in previous years.

(See “Maintaining Certification Integrity” on page 7)

25 Years of Continuous Oncology Certification

Ashley Leak, RN, MSN, OCN®

On April 30, 1986, ONCC administered its first OCN® examination in Los Angeles, CA, at the ONS Annual Congress where 1,607 nurses took the examination. Currently, 161 nurses have remained continuously certified for 25 years.

Two nurses who took that test are Pat Baldwin, RN, MSN, OCN®, and Cheryl Brohard, PhD(c), RN, AOCNP®. Both Pat and Cheryl remember waiting in line in 1986 to take the OCN® examination, and both passed the test. They were ecstatic! Pat recertified by retesting in 1990 and was unhappy with the evolution of the examination. Pat’s interest in making changes to the examination led her to become involved in the item writing and test development committees. She later became chair of the OCN® test development committee. Her involvement led her to pursue a leadership position, and she became the ONCC President in 2005 and served until 2007. Pat feels strongly that oncology certification reflects a broad base of knowledge and is a professional imperative. Magnet recognition has led many institutions to focus efforts on increasing certification. She also supports the role delineation studies that provided evidence for subspecialty certifications and a differentiation between AOCNP® and AOCNS® examinations.

Before Cheryl took the examination, she vividly remembers studying with a group of 12 nurses who met every week for two months. Cheryl remembers sitting in the auditorium in Los Angeles and thinking about the reasons for taking the examination. Cheryl believed the OCN® credential represented her commitment to the profession of oncology nursing. The pay differential did not enter into her mind. After years of maintaining her OCN® and eventually attaining the AOCN® credential, Cheryl is proud to have maintained her certification and what it represents. Just like Pat, Cheryl became involved on the test development committee. She volunteered her time there for three years. To Cheryl, obtaining AOCN® certification affirmed her knowledge of advanced oncology care. Patients, families, and communities have recognized her credential in diverse oncology care settings.

Pat and Cheryl encourage oncology nurses across the continuum of care to obtain certification. It demonstrates the nurse’s knowledge and encourages the pursuit of continuing education throughout the spectrum of oncology care.
A mong topics discussed at the March 2011 ONCC Board meeting was how the economy may be impacting certification. Unemployment and underemployment have caused many to experience financial difficulties. Even in the world of nursing, job security and availability is not what it once was.

Given this environment, the willingness of nurses to seek certification and the support provided by employers is encouraging. The economy may, in fact, be contributing to more nurses becoming certified in recent years as it is a relatively inexpensive way to distinguish one’s self in the job market. The number of nurses seeking certification for the first time and those renewing has steadily increased over the past few years. In fact, the number of nurses certified by ONCC is at its highest in ONCC’s 25-year history. Currently, more than 31,000 nurses hold an OCN®, CPHON®, CBCN®, CPON®, AOCN®, AOCNS®, or AOCNP® credential.

The reasons for the growing number of certified nurses may be related to an increasing appreciation for the value of certification. ONCC, as an organization and through the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program, focuses on highlighting the value of certification by educating nurses, employers, physicians, patients, and other stakeholders. Additionally, it should not be discounted that, among hospitals seeking Magnet status, increasing the number of certified nurses is a desired and measurable goal. Nurses value certification for the intrinsic rewards such as increased confidence as well as the external reward of setting themselves apart from other applicants in a competitive job market.

Certification Trends

A review of the number of nurses who renewed in 2010 demonstrated a high interest in maintaining certification. Congratulations to AOCN® certified nurses for having the highest renewal rate ever at 88%. In addition, 73% of OCN®, 85% of AOCN®, 83% of AOCNP®, and 62% of CPON® candidates renewed. ONCC saw the highest number of total certification candidates in a given year—9,668.

Overall, the high rates of re-certification seem to validate the popularity of the ONC-PRO option for renewal. Again, looking at OCN® renewal trends, a jump from 60% up to 70% of candidates actually renewing their certification occurred in 2004 after ONC-PRO became an option for every renewal cycle. The re-certification rate has held on to this gain ever since.

Awards and Recognition

ONCC continues to support the recognition of certification through certified nurse awards and Roberta Scofield scholarships. The scholarships are named for ONCC’s first president, Roberta Scofield (1984–1988). Oncology nurses have become more aware of these programs as evidenced by record numbers of nominations. For 2011, more than 350 nominations were received by ONCC. This represents a year-to-year increase of more than a hundred, and the growing appreciation for ONCC awards and scholarships is apparent when contrasted to less than 50 total nominations for the 2001 awards.

Sub-Specialty Certification

ONCC has contracted with Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) to conduct a role delineation study of blood and marrow stem cell transplantation nursing. Please see page 12 for more details on the project.

Endings and New Beginnings

Former ONCC President Vicki Norton, RN, BSN, OCN®, completed her term on the ONCC Board in May 2011. Her leadership qualities will be missed on the Board but welcomed by ONS as she begins her new role as ONS Director-at-Large.

Mary Beth Singer, MS, ANP-BC, AOCN®, ACHPN, has joined the Board as the newest member. Hailing from Boston, MA, Singer has an extensive background in oncology nursing and has been an important contributor to the efforts of ONCC over the years. She first attained certification in oncology in 1992. Of note, she has served on the Advanced Practice Test Development Committee since 2005, and the insights she has gained through this experience will be invaluable to the Board.
The Life and Death of an OCN® Test Question
Seth Eisenberg, RN, OCN®

OCN® test questions, officially referred to as “items,” can begin life several different ways. Most items originate from oncology nurses who have been selected to attend an Item Writing Workshop designed to train nurses to write items for the examination. Approximately a dozen nurses with a wide range of experience and expertise are recruited from all across the United States for each workshop. These Item Writers are mentored by members of the ONCC Test Development Committee (TDC), who were former Item Writers as well. Item Writers are assigned to write items for specific content areas of the Test Blueprint.

All new test items are deposited into the ONCC “item bank,” which contains both currently active and pre-test items. Newly written items need to be pre-tested to ensure they perform adequately. If needed, new items may be edited by the TDC prior to going into the pre-test bank. New items also can be written and submitted directly by TDC members, although this usually occurs only when the bank is low in a particular blueprint category.

Each test form contains pre-test items that are indistinguishable from the live items to the test-taker. Pre-test items do not count toward the candidate’s examination score. The TDC meets twice each year to review all items and specifically scrutinizes the pre-test items to see how they performed. If the statistics were acceptable, the pre-test item graduates to the active item bank and is ready to be used for a future test form. If a pre-test item did not do well, the TDC attempts to rewrite it. Perhaps the wording was a bit unclear, or one of the options was too similar to the correct answer. If the item can be fixed, it will go back into the pre-test bank and will end up on a future test form where the pre-test process begins again. Pearson VUE, the company with which ONCC contracts, is charged with assembling a test with items from the bank that fulfill the blueprint and maintain statistical integrity. Both of these points are essential—each test form must contain the same number of questions based on the current blueprint (e.g., 5% Health Detection and Promotion, 15% Treatment Modalities) and each form must have approximately the same degree of difficulty.

The TDC reviews all items that have been selected by Pearson VUE, looking at performance statistics and whether the item represents current practice. While all Items must be fully referenced to be accepted, nursing practice changes and treatments commonly used several years ago may no longer constitute first-line therapy. These obsolete items are retired. Well-performing items that reflect current practice remain on active duty in the bank until called upon to be placed on a test form. As the first step in developing a test form, some poor performing items may continue to perform poorly and ultimately end up being retired.

The list of reference books used for items is updated annually. Each active item in the bank must be referenced to the new books. If a current reference cannot be found, the item is retired.

How long can an item live? Because a tremendous amount of time, effort, and expense goes into each OCN® item, longevity is important. If it is solidly-written, performs well, and remains current, an item can last several years. However, maintaining the quality of the examination is always the primary concern.

Chapter Grant Winners Encourage Certification Creatively
Deena Centofanti, RN, MS, AOCN®

The Galveston Bay Chapter of ONS is a small yet ambitious chapter. They have a lot to celebrate this year! The chapter received $1,500 to help meet its mission of promoting excellence in oncology care. This 30-member chapter has been active in ONS for 25 years. Its members are like a family and want to expand their family and promote excellence in oncology nursing. They developed a grant program to make the process to achieve the OCN® credential more attainable. Ten nurses were eligible to receive study materials and access to the local review course in exchange for mentoring future nurses through the process. It is education at your fingertips. To date, four nurses have been recipients. They are off to a great start and plan on offering the program to qualified applicants in the coming months.
Harbin Clinic’s 20 locations, 200 providers, and 1,400 employees throughout the northwest area of Georgia make up the largest physician-owned multi-specialty practice in the state. One of its many specialties is oncology, and the oncology department of Harbin Clinic is award-winning, taking the Georgia Society of Clinical Oncology (GASCO) “Practice of the Year” title in 2010. The Harbin Clinic was the first to receive this award, which was created to recognize those in the community whose care aligns with GASCO’s mission.

A vital part of the Harbin Oncology Program is the Harbin Clinic Cancer Center in Rome, GA. The center boasts cutting-edge diagnostic and treatment modalities, numerous clinical trials, and an integrated approach to cancer care. It also features a state-of-the-art infusion center where patients can be assured of the most progressive treatments and a nursing staff that is nothing less than extraordinary. All eight of the registered nurses working with the clinic are OCN®s—every case manager and every infusion nurse, including the center’s clinical coordinator, Joy Lee, RN, OCN®.

Oncology nursing certification is not a requirement at Harbin, but it is a choice that each nurse makes deliberately and without hesitation. The clinic hired nurses in the past without their OCN® certification, but all succeeded in becoming certified with the encouragement and support of their peers, clinic leadership, and the physicians.

Financial support and accolades await those preparing for and achieving certification. Travel expenses and course costs for review courses are paid, and the Core Curriculum for Oncology Nursing and study guide are supplied at no cost. Once the nurses are certified, test fees are reimbursed, an hourly supplement is given, and every nurse’s OCN® certificate is framed and displayed in the infusion center. Every year on Certified Nurses’ Day, each OCN® receives a gift along with a note of thanks for her commitment to caring.

Job satisfaction runs high at the Harbin Clinic Cancer Center. Aside from the addition of a clinical coordinator in August of 2007, no turnover in nursing staff has occurred in the past five years. Paige Shaw, RN, OCN®, CBCN®, is a case manager at the center. She says, “I feel fortunate to work with a group of oncology nurses who also have the care and compassion that I would want to be treated with. Their knowledge is exceptional, and the working atmosphere is happy and conducive to learning. We are encouraged to learn, be independent thinkers, and to pursue additional education and certification. We have support from our physicians, clinical coordinator, cancer center director, and each other.”

Congratulations to Harbin Clinic Cancer Center, where certification is supported in the delivery of “world-class healthcare.”

Is There a Leader in You?

Have you thought about how you might benefit by serving on a Board of Directors—how it could help you sharpen your leadership skills, grow professionally, and meet new people?

ONCC is seeking nominations for one position on the ONCC Board of Directors that will be open for election in November 2011. This position is open only to nurses who hold current OCN® certification. Nominees should exemplify integrity, sensitivity, good communication and oral presentation skills, leadership and planning skills, analytical ability, decision-making ability, strategic planning experience, and the ability to organize and monitor work.

More Employers Recognized for Staffing With Oncology Certified Nurses

Seventy-seven institutions recently received recognition plaques from ONCC for staffing their facilities with certified nurses. Any patient care setting in which the majority (more than 50%) of professional oncology nurses are ONCC-certified are eligible for this plaque. If you think your institution qualifies and you would like to request your free plaque, go to http://www.oncc.org/Awards/Plaques.

Addison Gilbert Hospital, Gorton’s Center in Gloucester, MA
Adirondack Medical Center, Merrill Cancer Center in Saranac Lake, NY
Andrews and Patel Associates in Harrisburg, PA
Aurora Healthcare, Vince Lombardi Cancer Center Clinic in Sheboygan, WI
Bassett Healthcare Network, Cancer Institute in Cooperstown, NY
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Oncology Department in Vermont
Cancer Centers of the Carolinas in Greenville, SC
Cancer Institute of New Jersey in New Brunswick
Centegra Health System, Sage Cancer Center in McHenry, IL
Children’s Hospital Boston, 6N, in Massachusetts
Chippewa County Montevideo Hospital, Oncology/Infusion Center in Minnesota
CJW Medical Center, Thomas Johns Cancer Hospital in Richmond, VA
Cleveland Clinic Cancer Center at Fairview Hospital, Moll Pavilion in Ohio
Columbia-St. Mary’s, Watertower Medical Oncology in Milwaukee, WI
Commonwealth Hematology-Oncology in Stoneham, MA
Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Jimmy Fund Clinic in Boston, MA
Danbury Hospital, Chemotherapy Infusion Suite in Connecticut
Dartmouth Hitchcock, Norris Cotton Cancer Center in Manchester, NH
Daviess Community Hospital, Hematology/Oncology Specialty Clinic in Washington, IN
Duke Raleigh Cancer Center in Raleigh, NC
DuPage Medical Group Oncology in Naperville, IL
EMH Regional Healthcare System, Outpatient Infusion Services in Elyria, OH
Emory Winship Cancer Institute in Atlanta, GA
Enloe Regional Cancer Center, Infusion Therapy in Chico, CA
Ephrata Community Hospital, Ephrata Cancer Center in Pennsylvania
Flagstaff Medical Center, Cancer Centers of Northern Arizona
Healthcare in Arizona
Fort Sanders Infusion at Oak Ridge in Tennessee
Froedtert Health St. Joseph’s Hospital, Alice and Elmore Kraemer Cancer Care Center in West Bend, WI
Georgetown University Hospital, Oncology Infusion in Washington, DC
Glen Cove Hospital, Don Monti Cancer Center in New York
Green Bay Oncology in Wisconsin
Hardin Memorial Hospital, Oncology in Elizabethtown, KY
Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care, Radiation Oncology in Augusta, ME
Hematology-Oncology Associates of the Quad-Cities, PC in Bettendorf, IA
Hennepin County Medical Center, Comprehensive Cancer Center, GI Cancer Center in Minneapolis, MN
Hillcrest Hospital, Hirsch Cancer Center in Mayfield Heights, OH
Indiana University Health North Hospital, Breast Care, in Carmel, IN
Lawrence and Memorial Hospital, The Community Cancer Center in New London, CT
Massachusetts General Hospital, Radiation Oncology at Newton Wellesley Hospital in Boston
McAlester Cancer Care Associates in Oklahoma
Medical Consultants, PC, Oncology in Muncie, IN
Medical Oncology Associates in Aiken, SC
Medical Oncology Associates in Augusta, GA
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Experimental Treatment Center in New York, NY
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Basking Ridge, NJ
Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center in Middletown, CT
Norton Cancer Institute, Louisville Oncology Shelbyville in KY
NYU Langone Medical Center, Hassenfeld Children’s Cancer Center in New York
Orlando VA Medical Center, Hematology Oncology Clinic in Florida
Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Santa Cruz Infusion Center in California
Park Ridge Health, Oncology Infusion Center in Hendersonville, NC
Poudre Valley Hospital, Oncology Patient Navigator Program in Fort Collins, CO

(See “Employers Recognized” on page 11)
ONCC Staff Member Joins ABSNC Board

Annette Parry Bush, RN, BSN, MBA, OCN®, certification programs manager for ONCC, recently was elected to the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) Board of Directors. Bush will take office on July 1, 2011, and will serve through 2014.

“The ABSNC Board has an important mission to evaluate programs against the ABSNC standards, which are recognized throughout the industry as the mark of excellence,” said Marilyn Ricci, RN, MS, CNS, CNRN, ABSNC president. “We are pleased to add new members who understand this important role and will contribute their knowledge and experience to furthering our mission.”

Bush currently serves as a certification program manager at ONCC.

ABSNC is the only accrediting body specifically for specialty nursing certification programs. Currently, ABSNC accredits 54 certification programs from 16 specialty nursing certification organizations, including ONCC. For more information about ABSNC, visit www.nursingcertification.org and click on “Accreditation.”

Maintaining Certification Integrity (continued from page 2)

There were many sleepless nights while the Board, the Executive Director, and staff members were confronted with the issue. We worked diligently to determine what would be the best solution for candidates without compromising the rigor and defensibility of the certifications for which the primary purpose is protection of the public. We used many resources and gathered as much data as possible before coming to the conclusion to reset the passing points and rescore all advanced examinations taken during 2010. We made the decision early on to be as transparent as possible and share ongoing information with all stakeholders. In the end, we believe we resolved the issue in the most equitable way without compromising the integrity of the certification process.

A different kind of ethical issue that the ONCC Board of Directors also encounters is fraudulent use of the ONCC credentials by nurses who have never passed the examination as well as by those who continue to use the credentials after failing to renew certification. These nurses usually are reported to ONCC by their employers or by colleagues. ONCC uses a defined process to investigate these allegations and provides the nurse who is accused with the opportunity to respond as well as to appeal any disciplinary actions the Board may impose. If there is clear evidence that an ONCC credential has been used fraudulently, the Board will impose sanctions such as denial of certification for a specified period of time. This means that the nurse may not take the certification examination for the time period specified by the Board. In addition, the infractions and sanctions are reported to the nurse’s employer, state board of nursing, the Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses, and ONS.

What are the ethical implications of fraudulently using a credential? A nurse who does this sacrifices trusting relationships with patients, peers, and employers and puts his or her future at risk and the institution in jeopardy. ONCC takes action against these individuals to protect the integrity of the oncology nursing credentials. Only those nurses who have met the eligibility criteria and demonstrated their specialized knowledge and skills by passing an examination are permitted to use the credentials.

All nurses and employers also have a responsibility to protect the integrity of the certification process. Based on industry standards, the names of all certified nurses are public information and anyone may use ONCC’s online system to verify the certification status of nurses. Employers have a responsibility to verify the certification status of the nurses they employ and should periodically verify that the nurse has met recertification requirements. Questions about the certification status of any nurse should be directed to the ONCC national office.

As surely as the seasons change, ethical dilemmas will continue to occur. When it is your season of the year to certify or recertify, remember your ethical responsibility to protect the integrity of the process for all involved. Also, keep in mind all of the volunteer hours that it has taken to keep up with all of the changing seasons of certification over the past 25 years.
Photos From the 2011 36th Annual ONS Congress

Here’s a quick look at some of the ONCC activities that took place during the recent ONS Congress. Watch the next issue of Certification News for profiles of the 2011 award winners.

Attendees at ONCC’s Recognition Breakfast for Oncology Certified Nurses raised a glass in toast to 25 years of oncology nursing certification.

Nurses visited the Certification Oasis for answers to their questions about certification.

Karyn Buxman kept the crowd laughing as she talked about the benefits of living life “amazed and amused.”
Volunteer leaders from ONCC’s past and present prepared to enjoy wine tasting at ONCC’s Leadership Anniversary Reception.

ONCC past presidents (from left) Carl Brown, Pat Baldwin, Julie Ponto, and Marcelle Kaplan joined current president Jo Visser, and past presidents Amy Strauss-Tranin and Vicki Norton for recognition during the Anniversary Reception.
Certified nurses found the Oasis to be the perfect spot to sit and talk during Congress. Complimentary chair massages in the Oasis provided certified nurses with an opportunity to relax and refresh during Congress.
Employers Recognized (continued from page 6)

Prince William Hospital/Novant Health System, Outpatient Infusion Clinic in Manassas, VA
Redwood Area Hospital, Cancer Care/Infusion in Redwood Falls, MN
Regions Hospital, Cancer Care Center in St. Paul, MN
Riverside Cancer Infusion Center in Newport News, VA
Samaritan Albany General Hospital, Oncology Infusion Clinic in Oregon
Snae River Oncology in Idaho Falls, ID
St. Anthony Hospital, Outpatient Infusion Services Clinic in Gig Harbor, WA
St. Francis Hospital, Outpatient Oncology Care Clinic in Federal Way, WA
St. Joseph Health System Tawas,
Seton Cancer Institute in Tawas City, MI
Texas Oncology at Amarillo Cancer Center
Texas Oncology in Cedar Park
Texas Oncology in Fort Worth
Texas Oncology in Irving
Texas Oncology Midtown in Austin
Texas Oncology North Austin in Austin
UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center, Bone Marrow Transplant in La Jolla, CA
UPMC Cancer Center, John P. Murtha Pavilion in Johnstown, PA
UPMC Passavant Cranberry, Comprehensive Breast Center in Cranberry Township, PA
UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Nellie B. Connally Breast Center in Houston, TX
VA Western New York Healthcare System, Infusion Clinic in Buffalo
Washington Hematology Oncology in Yakima
Wentworth Douglas Hospital Seacoast Cancer Center, Radiation Therapy in Dover, NH
Westview Hospital, Cancer Care Center, Unit 4 in Indianapolis
Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Treatment Center in Guilford, CT
Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital, 7-West Pediatric Oncology in Guilford, CT

Certified Nurses Join Ranks of Advocates

Seventeen certified nurses recently joined the ONCC Advocates Program, bringing the total number of advocates to more than 700. Advocates are oncology certified nurses who voluntarily promote the benefits of certification in their workplace, chapter, or community. New advocates include the following.

Giselle Boward, Durham, NC
Susan Bowman, York, PA
Cindy Briola, Philadelphia, PA
Sharon Brookbank, Highpoint, NC
Barbara Fairshter, Marysville, CA
Susan Franco, Omaha, NE
Melissa Gilhart, Houston, TX
Teresita Gimeno, Daly City, IA
Heather Harsh, Denver, CO
Kristin McKinley, Lafayette, IN
Susan Mejstrik, Omaha, NE
Erin O’Shaughnessy, Embrun, Ontario
Paula Polischeck, Deerfield Beach, FL
Wayne Quashe, New York, NY
Deborah Spitzer, Dallas, TX
Jill Winther, Green Bay, WI
Elaine Zapata, Gainesville, FL

If you would like to become an Oncology Nursing Certification Advocate, go to www.oncc.org/Support/Advocates to learn more and for a link to an online application.

Due to Renew This Year—Mark Your Calendar for September

If you’re due to renew your ONCC certification in 2011, apply for renewal by Option 1 (practice hours + Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option) by September 15 for the lowest renewal fee.

Renewal candidates who submit complete applications, ONC-PRO logs, and payment by September 15 will qualify for the early bird application fee—a savings of $100 off the final deadline fee. All 2011 Option 1 renewal applications and logs must be received by October 15, 2011 (with the full non-discounted fee).

Why are applications due in September if certification doesn’t expire until December? ONCC needs to have them early to ensure that applications can be reviewed and certification renewal can be granted to those who meet the requirements before their credential expires.

The review of ONC-PRO applications is a very thorough and time-consuming process. In addition, thousands of applications are received at the deadline date. To ensure that ONCC staff members can complete the proper review of each application and communicate the results to the candidate before the certification expiration, the applications must be received a few months in advance of the credential expiration date.
BMSCT Role Study Underway

ONCC has undertaken a role delineation study of blood and marrow stem cell transplantation (BMSCT) nursing. As part of the study, a national online survey of BMSCT nursing practice will be conducted to obtain information about the tasks associated with this role and the knowledge nurses need to perform these tasks. This is the first step in determining whether a program to validate specialty knowledge in BMSCT nursing is needed.

How can you participate? A broad sample of nurses who practice in BMSCT nursing (adult or pediatric) will be invited to complete the survey. The survey will be essential in obtaining descriptive information about BMSCT nursing. To obtain the most accurate data, it is essential that as many BMSCT nurses participate as possible. ONCC will offer the following incentives for participation.

- Entry into a drawing for one of 10 $100 gift cards
- ONCC-certified nurses will receive 5 ONC-PRO points in the category of Volunteer Leadership Service for completing the survey.

If you’d like to be included in the pool of nurses who may be asked to complete the survey, be sure that ONCC has your current e-mail address. It’s easy.

- Log on to My Profile at https://profile.oncologycertification.org/.
- If you have a profile, log in and be sure that your current e-mail address is listed under “My Personal Information” and select “Blood and Marrow Transplant” as your primary specialty in the “Demographics” section.
- If you don’t have a profile, click on the “Create Profile” link to enter the information. Note: you do not need to be a member of ONS or certified to create a profile.

Watch your e-mail for more information about ONCC’s BMSCT role delineation study in the coming months.

2011 Test Dates and Application Deadlines

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<th>OCN®, CBCN®, CPHON® Test Dates</th>
<th>Early-Bird Application Deadline (save $100)</th>
<th>Final Application Deadline (full fee)</th>
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AOCNP® and AOCNS® tests are offered year round, from February–December. Applicants who are eligible to test will receive an Authorization to Test that provides a 90-day testing window. Candidates must test during the 90-day period. To ensure a 90-day testing window in 2011, candidates should apply by September 1, 2011. Candidates who apply after September 1 may have less than 90 days in which to test.

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