



## Oncology Nursing Society

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# News Release

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## **Congress Reintroduces Legislation to Ensure Patient Education is Part of Standard Care for People With Cancer**

PITTSBURGH, PA—April 28, 2009—The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) with Representative Steve Israel (D-NY) and Representative Pat Tiberi (R-OH) announced that the ground-breaking legislation known as “Assuring and Improving Cancer Treatment Education and Cancer Symptom Management Act (HR 1927)” has been reintroduced to the House of Representatives. The legislation would provide for Medicare reimbursement of the time that registered nurses spend educating people diagnosed with cancer and their caregivers about their disease and the effects of treatment.

The majority of cancer care today is provided in the outpatient setting or during relatively short hospital admissions. Adequate patient and caregiver education is crucial to reducing morbidity. “Studies have found that educating patients about side effects and helping them to manage their symptoms reduces pain, distress, adverse events, and the need for urgent or inpatient care,” said Brenda Nevidjon, RN, MSN, FAAN, president of ONS. “We feel strongly that individuals with cancer deserve to have access to comprehensive care that includes appropriate treatment and symptom education and management.”

More than half of all cancer diagnoses occur among people aged 65 or older, which directly impacts the Medicare program. Education makes a difference in helping patients manage significant side effects of treatment and can help to reduce adverse events and the need for urgent or inpatient care.

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"Oncology nurses spend a great deal of time coordinating cancer care and continually seek to contain costs while maintaining the highest standards of care," said Paula Rieger, RN, MSN, AOCN<sup>®</sup>, FAAN, chief executive officer of ONS. "Having a registered nurse provide education on symptom management will improve the delivery of quality cancer care."

ONS is a professional organization of more than 37,000 registered nurses and other healthcare professionals committed to excellence in oncology nursing and to leading the transformation of cancer care by initiating and actively supporting educational, legislative, and public-awareness efforts to improve the care of people with cancer. ONS provides nurses and healthcare professionals with access to the highest quality educational programs, cancer-care resources, research opportunities, and networks for peer support. Learn more at [www.ons.org](http://www.ons.org).