Oncology Nursing Society and Association of Rehabilitation Nurses Joint Position on Rehabilitation of People With Cancer

Cancer is a chronic disease with concurrent physical, functional, psychological, social, and spiritual sequelae. Rehabilitation services play a very important role at every stage of the disease process. Recent trends show an increase in the number of people diagnosed with cancer as well as an increased survival rate. People with cancer are living longer with cancer-related impairments and a comprehensive rehabilitation program can help them achieve maximal functional ability and adapt to their disabilities (Beck, 2003). Cancer rehabilitation contributes to the management of some of the most prevalent and distressing symptoms of cancer care, including pain, fatigue, and asthenia. Cancer rehabilitation is also an important part of cancer survivorship care planning, and can help to mitigate future complications by promoting wellness behaviors and activities as a component of a healthy lifestyle.

The Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN) and the Oncology Nursing Society believe the oncology rehabilitation registered nurse's role in the interdisciplinary team is pivotal in creating an environment conducive to quality patient care. "The goal of rehabilitation nursing is to assist the individual with disability and chronic illness in the restoration and maintenance of maximal health" (ARN, 2008, p. 13).

It Is the Position of ONS and ARN That

- Oncology rehabilitation care is part of quality cancer care, which is a right for all patients with cancer.
- Oncology rehabilitation is an option for all patients, with the ability to participate, at any stage of cancer.
- Oncology rehabilitation incorporates the individual with cancer and the family as fully informed partners and decision makers.
- Oncology rehabilitation includes timely access to and reimbursement for a coordinated, comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach.
- Oncology rehabilitation is best coordinated and delivered by registered nurses who have been educated and certified in oncology or rehabilitation specialties.
- Research and education in rehabilitation are funded to find ways to advance care for people with cancer.
- Oncology rehabilitation programs are collaborative and interdisciplinary, whether based in acute, subacute, or home care, and are focused on quality of life.

Approved by the ONS Board of Directors, 10/1999; revised 10/03, 10/06, 4/10.
Approved by the ARN Board of Directors, 10/1999; revised 10/03, 10/06, 4/10.

References

Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (2008). *Standards and scope of rehabilitation nursing practice*. (5th ed.). Glenview, IL: Author.

Beck, L. A., (2003). Cancer rehabilitation: Does it make a difference. *Rehabilitation Nursing*, *28*(2), 42–47.