



Oncology Nursing Society

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Celebrating our Little Victories Along the Way

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I recently had an incredible opportunity to attend a press conference at the White House with President Barack Obama. President Obama was hosting nurses to discuss his most recent initiative to revive talks around healthcare reform. It was amazing that I was sitting about 10 feet from the leader of the United States of America, and he was very personable, likable, and frankly, he reminded me of just another ordinary person. President Obama spoke of his love for nurses, and he jokingly told the crowd, “Michele knows!”

He reminded all of us in the audience what many of us had already witnessed...that there are people in this country with cancer who delayed care because they had no healthcare coverage, and there are other people diagnosed with cancer who have insurance but, because of some loophole or “precondition,” they are denied cancer care by the insurance companies. Simply put, I was in awe of this man who continued to push for healthcare for all Americans, people like you and me.

While I was in awe, an even stronger emotion was boiling under the surface. More than anything else, I felt an incredible amount of pride for the Oncology Nursing Society. In the last 3 months, we have been invited to the White House twice. Brenda Nevidjon, ONS President went to the White House in June as a representative from the only nursing organization to witness the President sign the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, legislation that ONS has been working on for years. And there I was, President-Elect of ONS, again in the presence of the President of the United States.

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Our invitations to the White House didn't happen by chance. It happened because of years of hard work and fortitude by both volunteer members and ONS staff, which has made us one of the most recognized and trusted nursing organizations in Washington and in this country. Yes, I was excited to be at the White House, and I was thankful for the opportunity. But more importantly, I realized that I was standing on the shoulders of past ONS Presidents, of past and current Board of Directors, of volunteers, and the very important ONS staff who have worked tirelessly for 35 years to better the lives of patients and families with cancer. Our work isn't finished, it won't be until we have a cure for cancer. But we must stop and celebrate little victories like invitations to the White House when they arise. And we must acknowledge the incredible work that all of you do for patients with cancer every day. Congratulations ONS!