

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEBORAH K. MAYER, PhD, RN, AOCN®, FAAN—EDITOR

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### ONS Congress Inspires Nurse

I would like to thank the editor for her editorial, "Taking Stock," in the June 2010 issue of the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* (pp. 257–258). I have been an RN for 12 years and became an oncology nurse in 2007; I joined the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) in 2009. I was privileged enough to be able to attend the ONS Congress in San Diego in 2010 for the first time. I could have never imagined what a wonderful experience I was embarking on!

I became an oncology certified nurse in November 2009, so I registered for Congress to obtain continuing education. I attended Congress with a friend (and coworker); we were excited for the opportunity to travel to San Diego and for the learning experiences. What we discovered was a whole new world of possibilities! The camaraderie among the attendees and the multitude of seminars and meetings to choose from was phenomenal. We did not realize that it was the 35th anniversary or even how special that was. We met fellow oncology nurses from around

the world and were able to talk with them about work environments, treatment regimens, and nursing in the past and present. It was amazing to learn about the evolution of oncology and survivorship as well as advancements in the field of oncology nursing. My friend has been an oncology nurse for more than 10 years, so she could participate in the reflection process and the "remember when's" better than I could, but I hope to attend many more Congress events and be able to do that. In fact, I am already anticipating the 50th anniversary of the ONS Congress!

I recommend that all oncology nurses attend Congress at least once; it truly was an experience that I will never forget. Beyond education, I learned how special ONS really is. I was amazed to see the huge room filled with thousands of oncology nurses—what

an enormous amount of educated, caring people. To think that each and every one of them touches the lives of patients with cancer on a daily basis is remarkable! I understand how important this annual gathering is; it promotes a time of socializing, learning, and reflection, or "taking stock" about where we have been and where we are going as nurses, professionally, clinically, and technically, in the world of oncology. This semester in college, I had to reflect on my past nursing experiences to determine my professional identity and definition of professionalism. I feel that being a member of a national organization and actually being able to see the fruits of its labors at work helped me immensely. Participating in the ONS Congress also allowed me to witness firsthand the true professionalism of many others!

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