

Position: Director-at-Large

Martha Polovich, PhD, RN, AOCN®

Assistant Professor

Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing & Health Professions, Georgia State University
Jonesboro, GA

ONS member: 33 years;

EDUCATION:

2010	PhD (Nursing)	Georgia State University
1987	MN (Adult Health Nursing)	Louisiana State University
1981	BSN (Nursing)	Louisiana State University
1971	Diploma (Nursing)	IJ Goldberg School of Nursing

ONS PARTICIPATION (national and local):

2015 – 2016 Member, Chemotherapy Safe Handling Stakeholders; Coordinator, PPE Selection Workgroup

2014 – 2015 Member, Leadership Pathways Development Team

2013 – 2016 Coordinator, ONS Chemotherapy & Biotherapy SIG

2005 – 2006 Founding President Southern Crescent Oncology Nurses Chapter

2000 – 2007 ONS Liaison to NIOSH Hazardous Drug Safe Handling Working Group

1998 President, Metro Atlanta Chapter ONS

WORK RELATED SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP:

2015 - 2017 Director, PhD Nursing Program, Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing & Health Professions

2011 - 2012 Director of Clinical Practice, Nursing Research & Education, Duke Oncology Network

2007 - 2011 Associate Director of Clinical Practice, Duke Oncology Network

2002 - 2007 Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Southern Regional Medical Center

1998 - 2002 Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Northside Hospital

1993 - 1998 Clinical Nurse specialist, Adult Health & Oncology, Southern Regional Medical Center

HEALTH CARE/ CANCER ORGANIZATIONS EXPERIENCE, OTHER PROFESSIONAL NURSING ORGANIZATIONS /Additional experience (community, political etc.):

2011 – 2015 Member, Expert Panel on Hazardous Drugs, United States Pharmacopeia

2011 – 2013 Member, Technical Expert Panel, Outpatient Chemotherapy Standards, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

2007 – Present Member, Sigma Theta Tau

2006 – Present Member, Southern Nursing Research Society

1999 – 2010 Member, Society of Gynecologic Nurse Oncologists

Position Statement:

Having practiced as a nurse for more than 40 years, I have served in various leadership roles in several clinical settings. As a staff nurse, I participated on policy and procedure committees. As oncology clinical nurse specialist I served as clinical leader and advocate for other nurses and patients. As clinical director, I learned the quality improvement process and how to be successful in implementing changes across multiple oncology settings. Each professional position provided opportunities to enhance my leadership abilities. I have taken on leadership roles at the local level in several ONS Chapters because I recognize the importance of committing time to worthwhile endeavors. I have specifically focused on developing written and verbal communication skills, since language has the power to influence change. I have learned to think before I speak and to carefully consider the impact of my words. My ability to listen and understand multiple sides of an issue are essential to my effectiveness as a leader. I have cultivated the ability to remain open to diverse opinions while maintaining consistency in my personal and professional values. I believe these experiences and qualities make me qualified for the ONS Board.

How have you advanced excellence in oncology nursing and quality cancer care?

My biggest contribution to excellence in oncology nursing and quality cancer care is my involvement in the development and implementation of the ONS Chemotherapy education process. I participated as a chemotherapy trainer for the entire life of that program. When I first had responsibility for administering chemotherapy and caring for persons receiving medical treatment for cancer, there were few resources available to new nurses like me. I was privileged to be a part of a program that promoted consistency in chemotherapy education, and we had an impact on thousands of practicing nurses. As co-editor of several editions of the ONS Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Guidelines and Recommendations for Practice I have been able to continue to influence oncology nursing practice related to these therapies. I have a long-standing concern about patient safety and have promoted the need for minimum competencies for nurses who administer chemotherapy. I have supported this through my publications and continuing education activities. I participated in developing the ASCO/ONS Chemotherapy Safety Standards by serving as co-chair of the steering group from 2008 through 2016. This group published consensus standards that are used to define quality care for patients receiving pharmacotherapy for cancer in any setting.

Choose either Innovation or Advocacy from the remaining two ONS Core Values and discuss how you have actualized this value in your leadership experiences

One of the core values of ONS is advocacy on the behalf of patients, but also the profession. Oncology nurses must be provided a safe work environment. Since my practice began before OSHA recommendations for safe handling were published, I have a long-standing concern about occupational chemotherapy exposure. I have contributed to nurse safety through my publications, including the ONS Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Guidelines and the Safe Handling of Hazardous Drugs (HDs), and multiple articles about minimizing HD exposure. I have influenced safe handling through participation in guideline development. One example is my representing ONS on the NIOSH HD Safe Handling Working Group, which resulted in published guidelines aimed at reducing HD exposure of healthcare workers. I have provided expert opinion to other organizations developing safe handling guidelines, including OSHA,

USP, pharmacy associations, and international nursing associations. These efforts have resulted in harmonization of the recommendations. Finally, I have used my expertise in the area of HD exposure to advocate on behalf of healthcare worker safety in legislative forums in two states and a US Congressional hearing on the issue.