

Position: Director-at-Large

Nancy G. Houlihan, MA, RN, AOCN®
Director of Nursing, Evidence-based Practice
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
New York, NY

ONS member: 20 years;

EDUCATION:

1984 Master of Arts in Nursing Teacher's College Columbia University
1974 BSN Hunter College City University of New York

ONS PARTICIPATION (national and local):

2013-2014 Congress Planning Committee

2009-2012 ONS Nominating Committee

2011 Chair, Nominating Committee

2009 Survivorship Task Force

2000-2010 NYC Chapter ONS Board, Education Chair, Director at Large

WORK RELATED SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP:

2016-present Director of Nursing, Executive Nursing Council, MSKCC

2010-2016 Nurse Leader Breast and Imaging Center, MSKCC

2005-2010 Nurse Leader, Cancer Survivorship Program, MSKCC

MSKCC Multiple Committee and program leadership

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

2009-present Cancer Care, Program Advisory and Oversight Committee

Position Statement:

I have been an oncology nurse and ONS member for my entire career. I frequently reflect on my good fortune in making that first job choice, one that provided me with the privilege of working closely with so many patients and families during their cancer experience and the exciting professional development that occurs in the midst of rapid scientific progress and translation to clinical care. It is a bond that oncology nurses share- our ability to make a difference because of our pursuit of evidence-based practice, quality outcomes and thoughtful, individualized caring. Oncology nurses never lose focus on the patient. As I have transitioned from staff nurse to Clinical Nurse Specialist to leadership positions, my commitment to what was best for patients, and the nurses who care for them, has remained front and center. Participation in my ONS chapter and the national level has provided me with worldwide colleagues that share my values and support me to be a better nurse. I am excited to join ONS as a Director to continue the ONS mission of leading oncology nursing practice and quality cancer care and to share in the rewards of how we collectively make a difference in the world.

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

As a CNS working with Advanced Lung Cancer patients when far fewer treatment options existed, I was very involved in influencing the quality and standard of care delivery for patients and families and mentoring nurses in my own organization, and internationally through ONS, Cancer Care, Lance Armstrong Foundation and various other advocacy groups. In particular, I edited the site specific text for ONS Publishing and multiple other manuscripts, developed the ONS online course, participated in development of several websites and taught in many continuing education programs across the country. In my current role as Director of Evidence-based Practice for a large cancer center, I have the opportunity to influence practice and quality every day. As we implement systems that allow staff nurses to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to integrate evidence into daily practice and identify meaningful quality measures to demonstrate positive change, our organization moves the bar higher towards excellence. Through the process, we are developing core groups of mentors who teach EBP methodology to our nurses and nurses across the country through the Helene Fuld Health Trust partnership. The program is committed to disseminating the work and provides mentorship to staff nurses for publications.

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

This era of rapid advances in treatment has created a new paradigm in cancer care, challenging nurses to seek innovative strategies to ensure patient safety and comfort. As leader of a large outpatient center, I led the expansion of a Phase I Clinical Trial program to support the demands of rapidly evolving precision drug development and gene sequencing initiatives. Working closely with the clinical research and trial nurses, learning platform based training for all nurses was developed to establish baseline competency in the scientific foundations and associated nursing care. Nurses quickly learned each target and specific agent and to navigate dozens of complex trials with undetermined toxicities. Remote monitoring and symptom assessment became far more essential with expanded use of portal and telephone APPs. Nurses engaged in enrollment in gene sequencing trials to identify new targets and acquired greater understanding of risk and consents. Core pools of mentors were identified to train staff at the chair side. Incremental staffing was budgeted and on-boarded to address increasing acuity. This experience is one example of how the pace of innovation in oncology requires adept nursing leadership to ensure care and safety, which I can apply to work on the Board.