Education of the Nurse Who Administers and Cares for the Individual Receiving Chemotherapy, Targeted Therapy, and Immunotherapy

Specialized education, preparation, and training of the nurse who administers and monitors systemic cancer therapies helps to ensure a safe level of care for individuals receiving and the clinicians administering these agents. The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) defines the process and content to educate nurses who administer and care for patients receiving systemic cancer therapies, including chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy.

It is the position of ONS that

- RNs are the professional nurses responsible for all aspects of administering and monitoring systemic cancer therapies, including chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy. State practice acts should be consulted when developing institutional policies and procedures.

- Educational programs for chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy are comprehensive, current, evidence-based, and population and setting appropriate. They consist of didactic learning followed by the successful completion of a clinical practicum under the auspices of the nurses’ institution or supporting agency.

- Competency is assessed and reinforced annually.

- All introductory and annual competency reassessment programs developed for nurses administering cancer therapies include the following content.
  - Types, classifications, and routes of administration
  - Pharmacology of agents, regardless of indications for use
  - Pertinent molecular biomarkers
  - Chemotherapy and radiotherapy protectants
  - Principles of safe preparation, storage, labeling, transportation, and disposal of agents
  - Administration procedures
  - Appropriate use and disposal of personal protective equipment
  - Assessment, monitoring, and management of patients receiving therapy in the care setting
  - Patient and family education for these agents, specific to side effects and related symptom management, and processes for urgent and ongoing follow-up
  - Assessment of, education on, and management of post-treatment care, including follow-up care procedures, late or long-term side effects, and physical and psychosocial aspects of survivorship