



Oncology Nursing Society

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As part of its mission, ONS honors and maintains nursing's historical and essential commitment to advocacy for the public good. ONS works collaboratively with policymakers, cancer and nursing community advocates, and other stakeholders at the local, state, federal, and international levels to advance legislative, regulatory, and programmatic efforts that will reduce and prevent suffering from cancer. As part of this effort, ONS seeks to integrate the nursing perspective throughout the policymaking process and urges that oncology nurses be appointed to all relevant federal panels, committees, commissions, and boards.

ONS Strategic Goal #1 – Advance the quality of cancer care and the safety of patients and staff.

Quality Cancer Care

Cancer is the nation's second-leading causes of death (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Each year in the United States, approximately 1.69 million people are diagnosed with cancer, another 595,690 die from the disease (National Cancer Institute, 2016), and nearly 15.5 million Americans count themselves among the growing community of cancer survivors (American Cancer Society, 2016). ONS calls on Congress and the Administration* to advance the quality of cancer care by

- Advocating for transformative research to advance cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment to achieve the goals of the National Cancer Moonshot initiative
- Promoting comprehensive treatment education, personalized cancer care planning, and awareness
- Ensuring access to appropriate pain management and palliative care, including psychosocial services
- Supporting access to cancer screening, medication, and treatment, including reimbursement parity for oral cancer drugs
- Encouraging the development of new drugs to treat cancers, including incentives for drugs to treat pediatric cancers
- Encouraging prevention and reduction of tobacco use as well as e-cigarettes, and ensuring affordable access to the full range of proven-effective cessation strategies and therapies
- Increasing federal funding for
 - Cancer research at the National Institutes of Health, including the National Cancer Institute, and the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities to develop new cancer screening tools and treatments and to also authorize and appropriate new funding to support oncology nurse scientists and sustain and expand quality-of-life, palliative care, and symptom management research
 - Research and research training at the National Institute of Nursing Research that builds the scientific foundation for clinical practice, prevents disease and disability, manages and eliminates symptoms caused by illness, and improves palliative and end-of-life care
 - Screening, education, early detection, and prevention programs through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Sustaining federal funding for education and awareness programs through the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Accelerating the development of innovative cancer care delivery and payment models that improve access to and the provision of quality cancer care and treatment

- Funding the development of appropriate, risk-adjusted quality and resource use measures for cancer care and delivery and supporting mechanisms for reporting key quality and resource use data to federal agencies
- Expanding access to primary care, chronic care management, and advance care planning services by supporting reimbursement and other policies that facilitate the provision of those services by oncology nurses
- Facilitating the development of health information technology standards and “meaningful use” and certification criteria to promote the exchange of cancer care and treatment data and information among disparate providers and with patients
- Facilitating innovative approaches to developing cancer care treatments that take into account individual differences in people’s genes, environments, and lifestyles, and supporting comparative effectiveness research.
- Eliminating policies that hinder information about and access to provider-directed applications of approved therapies
- Promulgating policies that support transparent labeling of biosimilars and appropriate provider notification when biosimilars are substituted for biologics.

Patient/Staff Safety

Quality cancer care must ensure patient and staff safety. ONS calls on Congress and the Administration to

- Ensure safe staffing and a safe work environment.
- Establish mechanisms to facilitate the reporting of adverse events associated with the use of health information technology in cancer care delivery and treatment.

ONS Strategic Goal #2 – Grow the Society by recruiting, engaging, and retaining a diverse mix of nurses caring for patients with cancer.

The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health report from the Institute of Medicine (October 2010) recommended that the United States “Prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health. Nurses, nursing education programs, and nursing associations should prepare the nursing workforce to assume leadership positions across all levels, while public, private, and governmental health care decision makers should ensure that leadership positions are available to and filled by nurses.”

Workforce and Education

Nurses directly and profoundly affect the lives of patients and play an integral role in the delivery of quality care. ONS believes the best outcomes in oncology practice are achieved through a highly-educated and skilled, experienced nursing workforce. As such, ONS strives to support its membership in grassroots advocacy to engage with their federal legislators, and to seek nominations for oncology nurses to serve on relevant federal panels, committees, commissions, and boards.

ONS calls on Congress and the Administration to support federal nursing workforce funding and policies and to recognize the important contributions of oncology nursing. Those goals may be advanced by

- Enacting the *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act*, which would encourage education in hospice and palliative nursing and establish programs for advanced practice nurses to train and teach in that area
- Reauthorizing and increasing federal funding for Nurse Education Act (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act) programs.

Value of Oncology Nurses

To maintain a robust oncology nursing workforce, it is imperative that federal policies recognize and reflect the true economic value of oncology nurses’ essential contributions to patient safety and outcomes by ensuring that Medicare policies and payments capture and cover the full range of inpatient and outpatient oncology nursing services (e.g., patient treatment education, supportive care, end-of-life care), including those provided by advanced practice nurses.

* The term Administration refers to the White House and other federal agencies, such the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Scope of Practice

To provide the most comprehensive, cost-effective care, oncology nurses must be able to practice to their full licensure and training. ONS calls on Congress and the Administration to preserve and promote oncology nurses' scope of practice, including within the Medicare and Medicaid programs, ensuring that nurses can practice to the full extent of their licensure and reimbursement policy is inclusive of nursing.

American Cancer Society. (June 2, 2016). ACS Report: Number of US Cancer Survivors Expected to Exceed 20 Million by 2026. Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/news/news/report-number-of-cancer-survivors-continues-to-grow>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Statistics for Different Kinds of Cancer. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/data/types.htm>

National Cancer Institute Cancer Statistics. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/understanding/statistics>

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