The following list is a general compilation of knowledge, skills, and tasks that may be required of the oncology nurse navigator (ONN) to be effective in their position. Please recognize that this list provides a full range of abilities that may not apply to all ONN practice settings or to new ONNs. The ONN should have a discussion with their colleagues and organizational leadership about their personal role and job components, realizing that different organizations and care settings will have some variance in the role.

**Knowledge**

- **Strong oncology knowledge**
  Certifications like OCN®, AOCNS®, AOCNP®, and CPHON® all demonstrate specific knowledge of cancer care for a specific patient population (i.e., adult or pediatric). Additional certifications, such as CBCN® and BMTCN®, prepare nurses to meet unique care needs and requirements of even more specific patient populations, and may be beneficial for ONNs working in those subspecialties.
- **Available screening and assessment processes and tools**
  (e.g. Gail Model, distress screening)
- **National, regional, and community resources**
- **Resources and ancillary referrals available in an organization or facility**
- **Evidence-based practice process including use of clinical guidelines and specialty resources**
- **Criteria for molecular testing and genetic counseling**
- **Advance directives, palliative care, and end-of-life concerns**
- **Patient privacy regulations**
- **Common barriers to care**
- **Organizational culture and specific barriers to an organization’s patient population**
- **Clinical trial types, general requirements, and finding available trials**
- **Insurance reimbursement systems**
- **Financial hardships and payer coverage**
- **Current trends and evidence through lifelong learning with continuing education and evidence-based practice**
Skills

- Critical-thinking skills
- Leadership skills
- Verbal and written communication skills
- Interpersonal skills; ability to develop collaborative relationships; ability to work in teams
- Organizational skills; ability to prioritize and reprioritize quickly
- Data collection and analysis
- Basic computer skills
- Ability to triage

Tasks

- Assess patients’ needs and make appropriate referrals
- Identify barriers to care and make appropriate referrals
- Use appropriate screening and assessment tools (e.g., distress screening)
- Make appropriate referrals based on patients’ insurance
- Maintain/use a comprehensive database of local, regional, and national resources
- Assist with coordination of appointments and with facilitation of follow-up diagnostic testing
- Facilitate and coordinate timely access and care with multidisciplinary team
- Communicate often and consistently with providers, ensuring seamless plan of care and follow-up care
- Facilitate individualized care based on culture, health literacy, ethics, psychosocial needs, etc.
- Serve as primary contact and advocate for patient
- Provide support for patients across the cancer continuum
- Act as a liaison among the patient, family, and caregivers
- Assess patients’ understanding of the disease process and treatment options required for informed decisions
- Assist patients with their treatment goals
- Provide comprehensive documentation of patient encounters, services, and referrals
- Provide and reinforce education in all phases of cancer continuum
- Assist with the post-treatment transition (e.g., survivorship care plan development, follow-up plans)
- Educate patients, family, caregivers, and the community about the role of the ONN
- Educate multidisciplinary colleagues about the role of the ONN, identified barriers, available resources, and the navigation process
- Educate and reinforce the issue of adherence to the treatment plan
- Develop oncology-related education materials
- Promote clinical trial awareness
- Participate in tracking and monitoring metrics and outcomes
- Participate in the community needs assessment and suggest program changes based on the results
- Report navigation program outcomes to key stakeholders
- Collaborate with other navigators outside the organization to share best practices and increase patient resources
- Implement and measure quality improvement initiatives
- Contribute to the knowledge base of the healthcare community through involvement in professional organizations, presentations, publications, and research

Examples

- View the following job descriptions (provided for reference only with permission by the identified organization; not to be altered or used for other purposes without express consent):
  - https://www.ons.org/sites/default/files/ONN_JobDescription_LVHN.pdf

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