

ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY POSITION



Oncology Nursing Society Position on Identification of RNs in the Workplace

Changes in healthcare delivery have resulted in the increased use of unlicensed assistive personnel in healthcare settings throughout the continuum of care. While this shift is occurring, the United States is preparing to face the greatest shortage of RNs in the history of health care. Some healthcare organizations and facilities have prohibited RNs from displaying professional and/or academic credentials as part of their identification. The practice minimizes public and consumer awareness of who is delivering care to patients. Concealing the qualifications of care providers from consumers is deceitful and unethical. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations ([JCAHO], 2007) stated that "patients [should] receive adequate information about the person(s) responsible for the delivery of care, treatment, and services."

It Is the Position of ONS That

- Healthcare consumers have a right to be informed of the qualifications of those providing care.
- RNs wear insignia that identify themselves as RNs at all times during the provision of patient care.
- Advanced practice nurses identify themselves as such (e.g., clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner).
- RNs verbally inform healthcare consumers of the specifics of their roles in providing care.
- Healthcare facilities encourage personnel to wear insignia that identify credentials.
- Healthcare consumers are informed of caregivers' demonstrated specialized knowledge in oncology nursing through identification of the credentials earned by RNs through Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation examinations.
- In the event that a facility prohibits or discourages identification of staff credentials, staff members and

consumers submit written protest to facility administrators, the state's nursing association, the state's board of nursing, and JCAHO or other appropriate regulatory agencies.

- Every RN advocates that his or her state nurse practice act mandates identification of professional title and credentials.

References

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. (2007). *Comprehensive accreditation manual for hospitals: The official handbook*. Retrieved March 13, 2009, from http://www.jointcommission.org/NR/rdonlyres/6530941D-98AD-4AC7-8944-9DDE1116E503/0/OBS_Standards_Sampler_2007_final.pdf

*Approved by the ONS Board of Directors, 1997;
revised 6/00, 6/02, 10/05, 9/06, 3/09.*

To obtain copies of this or any ONS position, contact the Customer Service Center at the ONS National Office at 125 Enterprise Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1214 (+1-866-257-4ONS; customer.service@ons.org). Positions also may be downloaded from the ONS Web site (www.ons.org).