

ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY POSITION



Education of the RN Who Administers and Cares for the Individual Receiving Chemotherapy and Biotherapy

Specialized education and preparation of the RN who administers chemotherapy and biotherapy can ensure a safe level of care for the individual receiving these agents. Educational standards for oncology nurses are outlined in the *Standards of Oncology Nursing Education: Generalist and Advanced Practice Levels* (Oncology Nursing Society [ONS], 2003). Educational programs on chemotherapy and biotherapy offered by ONS include the Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Course, Cancer Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Renewal Course, Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Update, and Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Trainer Course (ONS, 2007). In addition, ONS provides up-to-date resources pertaining to new treatments using a variety of ongoing educational approaches. Guidelines and recommendations for oncology nurses providing chemotherapy and biotherapy are described in the *Core Curriculum for Oncology Nursing* (Itano & Taoka, 2005) and *Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Guidelines and Recommendations for Practice* (Polovich, White, & Kelleher, 2005). These publications describe the basic clinical content necessary to provide didactic information regarding the safe and competent administration of cytotoxic and biologic drugs. Successful completion of didactic learning must be followed by the successful completion of a clinical practicum under the auspices of a RN's institution or supporting agency.

It Is the Position of ONS That

- All curricula and syllabi developed for RNs administering chemotherapy and biotherapy include current and evidence-based content regarding
 - Principles of cancer chemotherapy and biotherapy
 - Types and classifications of chemotherapy and biotherapy
 - Pharmacology of cytotoxic and immunologic agents in cancer care
 - Chemotherapy and biotherapy indications in cancer care
 - Chemotherapy and radiotherapy protectants
 - Principles of safe preparation, storage, labeling, and disposal of chemotherapeutic and biologic agents
 - Proper use of personal protective equipment
 - Administration procedures, including administration schedule, dose, and route, as well as correct patient documentation
 - Monitoring patients receiving chemotherapy and biotherapy

- Patient education on chemotherapy and biotherapy side effects and related symptom management
- Post-treatment care and late and long-term effects, including psychosocial aspects of survivorship.

References

- Itano, J.K., & Taoka, K.N. (Eds.). (2005). *Core curriculum for oncology nursing*. St. Louis, MO: Elsevier Saunders.
- Oncology Nursing Society. (2003). *Standards of oncology nursing education: Generalist and advanced practice levels* (3rd ed.). Pittsburgh, PA: Author.
- Oncology Nursing Society. (2007). Treatment: Chemotherapy and biotherapy. Retrieved May 25, 2007, from <http://www.ons.org/ccCentral/treatment/chemo/index.shtml>
- Polovich, M., White, J.M., & Kelleher, L.O. (Eds.). (2005). *Chemotherapy and biotherapy guidelines and recommendations for practice* (2nd ed.). Pittsburgh, PA: Oncology Nursing Society.

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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 (866-257-4ONS; customer.service@ons.org). Positions also may be downloaded from the ONS Web site (www.ons.org).