

Transition Time

April 2022 can be a time to recalibrate, particularly after we have experienced this period of COVID-19–related anxiety, isolation, illness, and loss. Some will say April heralds a bright, hopeful spring, accompanied by readiness that supports warmer, sunnier perspectives. Others—hardened by more than two years of tough times and guarded outlooks—at best see this month as continuing a transition, consistent with the message from author Bruce Heller (2020): “Life is in the transitions.” Perhaps the best that we can hope for is to navigate at our own pace, capturing a so-called more normal, functioning, resilient frame of mind, even while world events keep us leery and sober about prospects for better days.

In the context of welcoming transitions, let us take note of two items of interest to oncology nursing. The first, from the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), is a return to an in-person ONS Congress® from April 27 to May 1, 2022, in Anaheim, California. The 2022 ONS Congress offers onsite and online attendees opportunities to recharge, refresh, and refocus—all to improve excellent oncology care and support nurses who provide and advance that care.

According to Jeanette Pretorius, BSN, MBA, RN-BC, NE-BC, OCN®, chairperson of the ONS Congress Content Planning Team:

The 2022 [ONS] Congress Content Planning Team set out with the goal to create a conference with broad appeal, providing oncology nurses from all walks of life an opportunity to experience the rejuvenating effects of learning from and networking with like-minded colleagues. . . . [Although] many of our sessions will be offered online, we are exhilarated to be live and in person once again.

Among current, relevant topics that will be presented at ONS Congress are the impact of COVID-19 on cancer care and strategies to support medically assisted end-of-life care. Pretorius said that attendees will be given realistic and practical tools that they can adapt and use in a variety of practice settings.

In addition, the team wants ONS Congress attendees to bring ideas and inspiration back to their home organizations, igniting ongoing improvements in cancer care. Pretorius said, “[ONS] Congress offerings can provide an understanding that the work is never done; it must continue in all our practices and academic settings across the country and world if oncology nursing is going to continue to evolve.”

The second returning item of interest to oncology nurses is the National Cancer Moonshot Initiative. In 2016 during the Obama administration, then–Vice President Biden announced

Cancer Moonshot as a platform to increase research funding and accelerate cancer discoveries. To renew its visibility, President Biden showcased Cancer Moonshot in February 2022, calling for action to improve cancer screening and early detection. Cancer Moonshot has established goals to reduce the death rate from cancer by at least 50% during the next 25 years and improve the experience of people and families living with and surviving cancer (Cancer Support Community, 2022).

In support of the first Cancer Moonshot initiative, Brenda Nevidjon, MSN, RN, FAAN, chief executive officer of ONS, said that ONS acted as a resource by ensuring that a nurse scientist was on the Blue Ribbon Panel and that two other nurse scientists served on Cancer Moonshot working groups. This follows

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the involvement of ONS members, who participated in various listening sessions when the initiative was first launched.

A successful relaunch of Cancer Moonshot will also depend on engagement of oncology nurses to drive innovation and sustain change at the local level. “Oncology nurses must be equal partners with other cancer care providers and administrators in designing change. ONS will support them as they advocate for their patients and their professional role in cancer care,” Nevidjon said.

In additional support of Cancer Moonshot, President Biden called on U.S. Congress in his State of the Union Address (2022) to fund the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). ARPA-H will aim to advance breakthroughs in cancer, Alzheimer disease, diabetes, and other debilitating illnesses. According to President Biden, ARPA-H would be based on a structure similar to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency—a U.S. Department of Defense project that advanced the internet and GPS. Referring to Cancer Moonshot as a unity agenda for the nation, President Biden said, “We can do this” (State of the Union Address, 2022).

So, with newly gained insight, grounded perspective, and rekindled energy, let us embrace these days of transition and find opportunities to refocus. As Nevidjon said,

As the world transitions from a COVID-19 pandemic to an endemic, lessons learned must not be shelved but used to make improvements in our healthcare system. Nurses' voices were heard through the news and social media, and the public learned about the essential role nurses have and the pandemic's toll. Let's keep the voice of nurses integrated into system transformation, with nursing having the proverbial seat at the table.



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