Prescription Drug Abuse: The New Drug Abuse Epidemic

Janice Phillips PhD FAAN RN

Overview of the Problem

Prescription drug abuse is now the nation’s fastest growing drug problem. While prescription drug abuse is not new, in recent years our country has experienced a dramatic increase in the use of prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes. Since 2003, overdose deaths from prescription drugs, especially the opioid painkillers, exceeded the overdose deaths from cocaine and heroin combined (CDC, 2011a, 2011b). Statistics revealed that in 2008, approximately 15,500 people died from prescription drug overdose, roughly triple the number of those killed by prescription drugs in 1999 (CDC, 2011b). Equally striking, in 2010 approximately 12 million Americans age 12 and older reported using prescription painkillers for nonmedical purposes (CDC, 2011b). Middle aged adults, women, and, people residing in rural counties are particularly at risk for abusing or overdosing on prescription drugs. Additional groups of people more likely to overdose on prescription drugs include Caucasians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives (CDC, 2011c).

The most commonly abused prescribed medications include: opioids (oxycodone, hydromorphone, morphine, hydrocodone); central nervous system depressants (diazepam, alprazolam) and stimulants [dextroamphetamine saccharate, amphetamine aspartate,

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dextroamphetamine sulfate and amphetamine sulfate tablets (Adderal® CII); methylphenidate hydrochloride (Ritalin®). The focus of this paper will be on the abuse of opioids. Prescription painkillers oxycodone, hydrocodone, oxymorphone and methadone have helped to fuel this epidemic because of their increased availability and the societal movement towards more aggressive pain management. During the year 2010, enough painkillers were prescribed to medicate every American adult around-the-clock for a month.

While most of these pills were prescribed for medical purposes, many of them were misused or abused (CDC, 2011b). Contributing factors for the prescription drug abuse epidemic include the aggressive marketing of opioids and other mood altering drugs. For example, marketing of oxycodone (1996-2001) has been labeled both a commercial triumph and a public health tragedy. Zee reported an in-depth analysis of the promotion and marketing of oxycodone. He asserted that the pharmaceutical industry’s intense marketing of oxycodone led to increases in the availability of opioids. A consistent marketing theme advertised the decreased risk of addiction for non-cancer related pain. This false advertisement cost the pharmaceutical industry fines of $634 million in 2007. Zee called for redefining marketing practices for opioids and other controlled substances (Zee, 2009).

Additional factors contributing to prescription drug abuse include

- perceptions regarding pain management among professionals and consumers
- the societal trend toward more aggressive pain management
- inadequate patient assessment
- an underrating of the addiction potential of prescribed drugs
- varied motivation (e.g., use to enhance academic performance, to get high)
- improper disposal of unused and expired drugs (Hernandez & Nelson, 2010)

Given the widespread reach of this epidemic, many legislative officials nationwide are drafting proposals in hopes of reversing this epidemic. Congressional proposals have included a focus in key areas: education, prescription drug monitoring, proper disposal of unused and expired medications, and stricter law enforcement. While a description of all of the legislative bills introduced during the 112th Legislative Session are beyond the scope of this discussion, a few proposals are presented here to help illustrate the breadth and depth of legislation that is needed to successfully address this epidemic. It should be noted that the issue of prescription drug abuse has bipartisan support. Democrats and Republicans are beginning to witness the impact of this epidemic across the United States.

Proper Medication Disposal

On October 10, 2010, President Obama signed into law “The Safe Drug Disposal Act of 2010”, Public Law 111-273 (PL 111-273). PL 111-273 amends the Controlled Substances Act. This new law provides individuals and patients who have lawfully acquired controlled substances an easy and safe way of disposing unused and expired controlled substances. Individuals can deliver their unused controlled substances to a designated and approved Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) location. Long-term care facilities and individuals entitled to a decedent’s property can dispose of a resident’s or a deceased resident’s controlled substances to these sites as well. The “National Prescription Drug Take Back Day” builds on this legislation by allowing citizens to dispose of their expired and unused medications at designated days and at designated sites. For additional information on upcoming Take Back Day Events and locations please visit: http://www.nationaltakebackday.com
Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2011 (S.507): Education, Monitoring, and Data Tracking

Concerned with the increases in opioid abuse and overdose deaths, Senator Rockefeller introduced “The Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2011 (S.507)” during the 112th Congressional session. This bill addresses prescription drug abuse in a number of ways by calling for:

- new training requirements for health care professionals before they can be licensed to prescribe controlled substances.
- consumer education on safe use of painkillers and prevention of diversion and abuse.
- basic clinical guidelines for safe use and dosage of pain medications including methadone.
- increased federal support for state Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMP), programs designed to track the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances in each state.

H.R. 1065 Pill Mill Crackdown Act of 2011: Increased Law Enforcement

A number of proposals address prescription drug abuse by calling for increased law enforcement and stiffer penalties for illegal use and distribution of prescription drugs. Representative Vern Buchanan from Florida introduced this bill to impose stiffer penalties for pill mill operators, those who illegally set up pain clinics and or illegally sell and distribute controlled substances. The bill seeks to double prison time and triple fines for these individuals who illegally distribute Schedule II and Schedule III controlled substances. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) when classifying controlled substances, Schedule II drugs are drugs with a high potential for abuse. These drugs are currently accepted for medical use and treatment in the US or are currently accepted for medical use with severe restrictions. Examples include opium, morphine, and cocaine. In contrast Schedule III drugs are drugs with a potential for abuse but to a lesser extent than Schedule II drugs. These drugs are also currently accepted for medical use and treatment in the US. Examples include short acting barbiturates and amphetamines. (U.S Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of Drug Diversion (2012). Title 21 United States Code (USC) Controlled Substances Act. Retrieved from http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/21cfr/21usc/812.htm)

These and other related bills are in different stages of the legislative process. For a more detailed and updated description of each of the pending bills, the reader is referred to www.thomas.gov or www.govtrack.us. As Congress prepares for another legislative session, these bills, if not passed during this session, will die in committee and will need to be reintroduced or rewritten during the 113th Congressional Session.

Implications for Cancer Care

Legislative proposals addressing this epidemic focus on strengthening provider and consumer education, ensuring the proper disposal of used and expired prescription drugs, enforcing stiffer penalties for the unlawful use and distribution of prescription drugs and securing funding for state prescription drug monitoring programs. The reader is advised to monitor the progression of these bills and additional bills that are introduced that may have a similar or new focus.

Combating this epidemic should be of concern to oncology nurses. One of the biggest challenges associated with this epidemic is the ongoing need to address how to balance drug control and appropriate pain management. No doubt many cancer patients depend on controlled substances to control their pain and enhance their quality of life. Cancer advocates, providers, pain specialists and other stakeholders have expressed concern about the impact of this epidemic on legitimate pain management and drug control. The recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on relieving pain in America acknowledges this as a major discussion point as we move to transform the way we manage pain in America. ONS members and those entrusted to care for cancer patients are encouraged to monitor these discussions and legislative activities as they advocate for cancer patients. We must be mindful that when appropriately prescribed and used, the risk for misuse and abuse is decreased. The Oncology Nursing Society is currently monitoring discussions,

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hearings, and proposed legislation surrounding pre-
scription drug abuse.

For example, during Fall 2010 the Oncology Nursing
Society submitted substantive comments on prescrip-
tion drug abuse to Dr. Margaret A. Hamburg, the
Commissioner for the Food and Drug Administra-
tion. The Society reiterated their concerns about cre-
ating a balance between legitimate access to pain
medications and drug control. As a strong advocate
for oncology patients, the Society called upon the
Commissioner to ensure that any strategy to alleviate
prescription drug abuse does not hinder patient ac-
cess to therapies that have been legitimately pre-
scribed by providers. Additional research and ongo-
ing evaluations along with provider and consumer
education on prescription drug abuse should be in-
cluded in any plan to alleviate this epidemic (Risk
Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies 2010).

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References


Zee, A.V. (2009). The promotion and marketing of OxyContin: Commercial triumph, public health trage-
dy. American Journal of Public Health, 99(2), 221-227
A research letter published in a recent issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association broadcast the fact that drug overdose deaths had climbed yet again in 2010, marking more than a decade of escalating overdose deaths (Jones, Mack, & Paulozzi, 2013). Included in this rising toll of drug-related deaths was a quadrupling of opioid-related overdose deaths from 1999 to 2010. But opioids were not the only drugs associated with overdose deaths; benzodiazepines, antidepressants and antipsychotics, as well as alcohol, were also implicated, often in combination with opioids.

Minimizing the risk of opioids has been the subject of much recent scrutiny. The legitimate use of opioids for pain management becomes tainted by drug misuse and abuse, and efforts to improve opioid safety could have unintended consequences. While the safe use of opioids is essential, access to these drugs for patients who need them is equally important.

In the realm of pain management for chronic non-cancer pain, a public debate is waging over the best strategy to reduce the risk of prescribing chronic opioids for long-term pain in this group of patients. Advocates on both sides of this discussion remain committed to responsible prescription of opioids, but their disagreement centers on how to achieve this end while avoiding harm. Although the care of cancer patients is not directly impacted by this discussion, the general philosophy and regulatory milieu affecting use and prescription of opioids for all patients could be influenced, so the topic is of interest to oncology nurses.

PROP and PROMPT DEBATE OPIOID LABELING CHANGES

Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing (PROP), a group of pain experts from a wide-range of medical subspecialties and related disciplines, petitioned the FDA in 2012 for specific changes to opioid analgesic labeling. The changes they proposed included removing the descriptor “moderate” as an indication for opioids, capping daily doses to the equivalent of 100 mg. of morphine, and limiting duration of continuous treatment to 90 days.

PROP’s argument suggested that the increased incidence of adverse events, including overdose and deaths, associated with opioids, as well as a rising incidence of opioid addiction, are rooted in the burgeoning number of prescriptions for these drugs in recent years. They further asserted that prescribing practices have been influenced by an aggressive marketing and public relations campaign by pharmaceutical companies designed to convince prescribers that 1) opioids are associated with a low risk of addiction, and 2) opioids have been underprescribed in the chronic non-cancer pain population (Buckley, 2012). The effort is

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aimed at refining indications for use of opioid drugs in the non-cancer pain population, and bringing them in line with available evidence.

A different group of professionals, dubbed as PROMPT (Professionals for Rational Opioid Monitoring and Pharmacotherapy), objected to the PROP proposed labeling changes via blog posts and website commentary. PROMPT proponents opposed suggesting a daily dose limitation and treatment duration limitations, and argued against the concept of restricting access to opioids based on pain severity, which is a subjective characterization that can fluctuate from hour to hour. The American Academy of Pain Medicine also contributed to the debate with this letter, which includes several signatories from PROMPT.

In order to explore the available evidence and opinions on this topic, the FDA held a 2-day hearing on the Impact of Approved Drug Labeling on Chronic Opioid Therapy in early February; a webcast of the hearing is available. For a closer look at the ongoing debate, including public comments from the lay public and professionals, see the regulations.gov site and access the Regulate Labeling of Opioid Analgesics file.

The opioid REMS requires that drug manufacturers provide or underwrite provider education about high-risk generic and brand-name opioids, including morphine sulfate extended-release capsules (Avinza™, Pfizer); Buprenorphine transdermal system (Butrans™, Purdue Pharma); methadone hydrochloride (Dolophine™, Roxane); fentanyl transdermal (Duragesic™, Janssen Pharmaceuticals); hydromorphone extended-release tablets (Exalgo™, Mallinckrodt); morphine sulfate extended-release capsules (Kadian™, Actavis); morphine sulfate controlled-release tablets (MS Contin™, Purdue Pharma); tapentadol extended-release oral tablets (Nucynta™, Janssen Pharmaceuticals); oxymorphone hydrochloride extended-release tablets (Opana ER™, Endo Pharmaceuticals); and oxycodone hydrochloride controlled-release tablets (OxyContin™, Purdue Pharma). Hydromorphone hydrochloride extended-release (Palladone™, Purdue Pharma) and morphine sulfate and naltrexone extended-release capsules (Embeda™, Pfizer) are also included in this group, but are not currently being marketed.

The REMS education will be offered to Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) prescribers,
including physicians, advance practice nurses, and physician assistants, but is not considered mandatory training. The desired outcome of this education is to improve the level of knowledge about care of the patient receiving any of these drugs, with required emphasis on assessment, therapy initiation, modification, patient management, treatment discontinuation, drug storage and disposal, and product specifics. Patient education components are also part of this REMS program, and are linked below.

**Professional Resources**

**CDC Prescription Painkiller Overdoses**

**Question and Answers about REMS for Extended-Release and Long-Acting (ER/LA) Opioid Analgesics**

**REMS Education**

Continuing education providers offering the REMS education will be listed [here](#), and will be updated as sessions are added. As of March 1, 2013, Boston University will launch an online program called the [Scope of Pain](#), which is a component of a larger program including live training, grand rounds formats, and train the trainer initiatives which will be offered at various sites.

**Patient Resources**

**Patient Counseling Document**

This [very basic document](#) from the REMS program focuses on key messages such as medication storage and disposal, and provides an area for specific information added by the provider.

**Medication Guides** are available for extended-release and long-acting opioids.

**Medication Disposal Guide**

Download a [printable list](#) of medicines that should be disposed by flushing into the plumbing system.

**References**


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**Caring for the Lymphoma Patient**

3.0 Contact Hours

**Thursday, May 16, 2013, 3:30-7PM**

Westin Chicago River North

320 S. Dearborn

Chicago, IL 60654

Program sponsored by Lymphoma Research Foundation

To Register, go to [www.lymphoma.org](http://www.lymphoma.org)
**Congratulations, Mary Beth!!** Mary Beth was chosen as the Patient Resource LLC Oncology Nurse of the Month for September 2012! This is what was written: “An oncology nurse for 35 years, Mary Beth Mardjetko, RN, MN, is the administrative director at Oncology Specialists, S.C., in Park Ridge, Ill. Previously serving as a manager of inpatient oncology, she moved to the outpatient setting in 2001 and now oversees the daily operations in the practice and directly supervises the nurses and pharmacy staff. "I am privileged to work with wonderful people who are always looking for ways to help the people we serve," she said. "One of the most satisfying aspects of my job is supporting and helping staff do their jobs better. Bringing one of their ideas for better care to our practice is wonderful."

**It’s never too late to reach a goal!** Congratulations to Patricia Quast who recently received her RN-BSN degree on-line through Purdue Calumet. Patricia is 60, and has wanted to accomplish this since she was 30!

**CCONS members always have something going on!!**

Jean Ridgeway is no exception. She is the IMER task force coordinator for “Improving Outcomes in Patients With Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia”. Way to go Jean!

Another busy member, is Eric Zack! Eric completed his DNP from Rush in December, has been invited as speaker to the Infusion Nurse’s Society’s annual meeting in North Carolina in May, and has been selected as an ONCC BMT certification exam test writer. Eric also leads and coordinates the Schwartz Center Rounds, which is a hospital wide initiative at RUMC to reduce moral distress and to promote compassionate care for all health disciplines. As if that weren’t enough, Eric has also written an article with associated podcast for CJON: “Standardizing Hazardous/Cytotoxic Drug Administration on Non-Oncology Inpatient Units”. Awesome job, and congratulations, Eric!!

Please send any and all news to Ann Cuvala at acuvala@gmail.com!
Talk about someone who has touched your heart and why.
I have had many “special” patients in my career. My most memorable was Barbara G. There is a book “Tuesdays with Morrie”, but I had Wednesdays with Barbara. She was a breast cancer patient that I saw almost weekly for 5 years. She taught me so much about life, courage and love. She dealt with her breast cancer diagnosis with a fighting spirit and determination and always demonstrated care and compassion for others.

Who in your world is most proud of you?
My family.

What would you like to tell nurses who are interested in working in oncology?
That it is probably the most rewarding field I could imagine. It is hard work and there are many drugs and therapies to keep abreast of. However, the relationship with patients and families is something that is very unique to oncology. Oncology nursing develops great professional skills in a nurse, but also helps you develop an astute awareness of the important things in life and the strength of the human spirit.

What is something that helps you relax and unwind?
I love to read! I belong to a book club. I also have a long car commute so I listen to many audio books. I love many kinds of books but am a great fan of Michael Connelly. Books are a great escape.

What is your idea of a perfect vacation?
I will travel anywhere, anytime that I am able. I usually plan day to day activities for sightseeing and tours. However, I was recently away in Mazatlan, Mexico over New Year’s and just relaxed. We rode horses on the beach, read books, watched the ocean and ate seafood every night. I really needed a relaxing getaway, so this was my “perfect” vacation.

If you could pick anyone in the world to have dinner with, who would you select, why, and where would you go?
I love to meet and talk to people. So no one specific, but someone who is interesting and a good conversationalist. I really enjoy Wildfire or someplace with really great desserts!

What is the lasting impression you hope to make on others?
I hope people remember me as caring, creative and passionate about my career and the cancer center where I work. I also have a good sense of humor and try to remember “not to sweat the small stuff”.
2013 CCONS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Marcia Mickle, Treasurer

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Happy 2013 to you all! I am excited for a new year. It always brings a feeling of renewed energy and spirit for me personally and professionally. A time to rewind and review what worked in the previous year, celebrate the great parts and learn from the rest.

To be writing my first President’s message is overwhelming. I remember first learning of this group in 1998 when I was a new graduate at Rush. As with many of us I was learning a new role, getting married, having babies and would attend as allowed. Over the years CCONS has been a constant. I could always count on good information coming from the group whether it be via a meeting or a newsletter. As I became more involved there were many more experienced nurses who became mentors to me and encouraged my participation and taught me along the way.

Healthcare is ever changing but in 2013 we have the Affordable Care Act coming to fruition with many effects on our patients and us. This is also a time in history when our researchers in Oncology are progressing the science at warp speed. It is and will remain a challenge to keep up.

My promise to you is to lead the group in a way that allows us to be a continued resource for your craft as oncology nurses. In order to do that you will see some new things such as CCONS on Twitter, CCONS on YouTube and a renewed commitment to our participation on Facebook. We will increase our presence in social media with thoughtful deliberation recognizing that many this will be the face of our organization. We have opened up these lines of communication to stay on the front line of information sharing in the fast changing environment of healthcare. We would love everybody to be a part of this and provide feedback. We are all learning as we go and look forward to the evolution of our group. As always our programming committee, led by Noreen O’Connor, is working diligently to provide us with educational programs to expand our knowledge base; our newsletter committee, led by Carol Knop and Mary Ellyn Witt, will continue to provide us with timely information and in depth knowledge of current practices in oncology.

In addition, ONS has made a significant change regarding membership. ONS national discovered that only one third of all national members belong to their local chapters. So, sometime in 2013 they will launch a new requirement that all members of national ONS must also choose and join a local chapter when joining or renewing membership. Your chapter of origin will default to the chapter aligned with the zip code you live in. You may change this if you choose or join more than one chapter at an additional cost. The outcome for COONS is more members in our chapter. I look forward to seeing all of the new faces.

Finally, we will be focusing on our community outreach in 2013 led by Maggie Smith. Maggie has done some wonderful work in this arena and developed great partnerships. If you would like to work with her she is always looking for nurse volunteers and is willing to discuss new ways we can support the oncology community.

However you choose to participate, I am excited about CCONS for 2013. Please reach out to me at any time; I look forward to hearing from you.

Christa
BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 1/01/13 TO 12/31/13

Checking: 26,334.40  
Savings: 30,185.30  
CD: 20,141.26  
TOTAL: 76,660.96

PROJECTED REVENUE/EXPENSES BY COMMITTEE

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I have been a member of CCONS since 2008, and Secretary of CCONS since 2012. As the secretary, I keep the board meeting minutes. My goal in this position is to keep track of the board and committee chair reports in an organized manner. Since taking on the role, I have restructured how minutes are recorded into a format where each board member or committee chair report is organized into sections outlining activities, discussion items and action items. This helps to keep track of progress being made on issues brought up at meetings. Being the secretary may not be the most exciting job on the board of CCONS, but it is critical as it keeps track of what goes on in board meetings, serves as an enduring record of activities of the chapter, and is required to maintain our non-profit status.

Outside of my role as secretary, I am currently employed at Midwest Palliative & Hospice Care Center where I work full-time as a palliative care nurse practitioner. I love my job and find the work that I do to be very rewarding. In my role, I spend three days a week seeing inpatients on a palliative care consult service at Northwest Community Hospital. The other two days I see patients at nursing facilities and in their homes in Chicago, Lincolnwood, and Evanston.

I function at the fullest capacity of a palliative care nurse practitioner: managing patients’ pain and other symptoms, and participating in goals of care conversations. The job can be draining at times, but the reward comes when I see that I helped to alleviate a patient’s suffering and helped them make the bridge from aggressive therapy, when the burdens of therapy are outweighing the benefits, to a mode where comfort and quality of life take the leading role.

I have been a palliative care NP since August of 2011, and it is my first role as a NP after earning my masters from The University of Illinois at Chicago. As a nurse, I worked in oncology, and mostly in bone marrow transplant. I completed a fellowship in clinical medical ethics at the University of Chicago in 2007. I am also a nurse ethicist and serve on the ethics committee at Northwest Community Hospital. Prior to being a nurse, I was actually an urban planner, but went back to school to be a nurse. I earned my BSN from Johns Hopkins in 2005.

CCONS is an incredible organization to be a part of. It has truly helped me to grow as a nurse, providing excellent continuing education opportunities. While earning my masters, CCONS helped me financially by awarding a nursing education scholarship, and this year with a scholarship to attend ONS Congress.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

MAGGIE A. SMITH
DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Happy New Year CCONS members! What better way to start the New Year off than by continuing with some very important educational initiatives! This year we have already conducted two educational programs for the Beat Breast Cancer Program and have more programs to complete this upcoming year. As you recall, we have been partnering with UIC on this program for the past two years. We are educating African-American women on the importance of conducting monthly self-breast exams, annual clinical breast exams and mammograms to help end the huge health disparity in breast cancer care that exists within the Chicago area.

We are planning to participate in several other important community outreach activities this year including Make the Cut with Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Jack Marston’s Melanoma Fund and Us Too Prostate Cancer Support. I strongly encourage you to stay tuned and check your e-mail often; more information will be forthcoming with the details surrounding each of these upcoming events and the opportunity for you to volunteer.

If you have any ideas surrounding community outreach activities, please feel free to share them with me via e-mail at smith.maggie@comcast.net.

CCONS MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

PATRICIA FRIEND
DIRECTOR AT LARGE

As DAL responsible for chapter awards and scholarships, I want to inspire nursing students, new nurses, and experienced nurses new to oncology nursing to become involved in ONS and the Chicago chapter. Also, my charge includes increasing chapter participation in the numerous available awards, honors, and scholarships. Completing an award and/or scholarship application/nomination can be time consuming and daunting, but having a guide or mentor to encourage or assist is invaluable. So as DAL, I hope to both serve as a resource in this capacity as well as identify other chapter members to mentor award/scholarship applicants.

Also, it is time to review our current chapter award offerings and determine if they are sufficiently meeting the needs of the chapter, in both scope and amount. Are there any new award categories that should be considered? Are there any awards that should be re-visited and revised? Oncology nursing and the healthcare field as a whole are rapidly evolving; the amount of change is unprecedented; a professional society must stay current and innovative in order to support its members and be leaders in the change movement. Chapter awards/scholarships serve as recognition for health care leaders and innovators, and must be reflective of current trends in practice, education, and health care delivery.

Patricia J. Friend, PhD, APRN, AOCN
Associate Professor
Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing
Loyola University Chicago
**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**
Dani Gale

**CCONS Board Elections 2014!**

Have you ever thought it might be fun to be on the CCONS board as the President, Secretary, Treasurer-elect, or Director at Large? All of these positions will be open and needed in 2014. It’s never too early to think about running for a position on the CCONS board!!

If you are interested contact Dani Gale now for more information at 630-248-5546 by cell or by email at dani.gale74@yahoo.com.

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**VIRTUAL COMMUNITY**

**BEV CARAHER AND JAN GOLICK, CO-CHAIRS**

Our Virtual Community has a new look!

We have streamlined the VC homepage by adding more options to choose from in the upper left hand corner. There is less scrolling, and we think it is more attractive and more user friendly.

We now have links to Facebook and Twitter at the top of the homepage. The Social Media Committee will be posting messages frequently, so be sure to follow CCONS in these formats.

Continue to send us announcements, job postings, etc. If your organization offers ONS Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Courses or Certification Review Courses that are open to attendees from outside your institution, please be sure to send us the details so that we can share with those interested in attending.

Check out the VC for information about upcoming events at [http://ccons.vc.ons.org](http://ccons.vc.ons.org)

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**THE ARCHIVES**

**MARYJO OSOWSKI**

No reports this quarter from the Archivist or Research Committee.

**RESEARCH**

**BARBARA GOBEL**

If you are interested in joining either of these committees, please see contact information on page 27, the inside back cover of this newsletter.
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE
MARY LAPPE

Membership Committee has been hard at work over the holidays making sure all our members have renewed their CCONS membership. Our goal is to have everyone active and involved from the very first day of the year.

Our renewal strategy of sending out the renewal forms in a hard copy to your home was an effort that was very successful. We obtained an unprecedented 73% return by January 1, 2013. We currently have 133 active members in our chapter and we could not be more pleased. CCONS is a major link to valuable educational resources, chapter meetings, employment opportunities, and all that ONS has to offer on a national level. As everyone knows, in order to be a member of CCONS you must be a current member of ONS.

This year we will continue our efforts to recruit student nurses interested in oncology nursing. Every student nurse in our area is welcome to attend a chapter meeting and check us out. We have active CCONS contacts at most of Chicagoland’s major universities. However, if you would like to become more active in recruiting students from your alma mater, or the institution where you work, please reach out to anyone on membership committee.

Also, do you know a retired nurse still passionate about their profession? ONS and CCONS offer discounts to retired nurses, not to mention the educational and networking opportunities that are available to keep you abreast in the field. Please, feel free to refer anyone who may be interested to one of us on membership committee or to our virtual community. Our doors are always open to anyone interested in oncology nursing.

All of this hard work would never be possible without the efforts of our membership team. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce and personally thank the CCONS 2013 membership team: Wendy Froman, Jo Lisowski, Catherine Moran, Jodi Palonis, and myself.

We are looking forward to a most rewarding 2013 for CCONS.

Thank You, Ima Garcia!

Ima has been a dedicated member of the newsletter committee for 5 years as both a contributor and co-editor. When Sandy Purl suddenly passed away in June of 2010, Ima continued on in the tradition that Sandy had set of producing an award winning newsletter. Ima worked to win the ONS Newsletter award for the Summer 2010 edition and did! Ima has a knack for selecting members to highlight in the newsletter and has been creative in identifying authors and topics for the lead and special features. She has encouraged “young” writers to try their hand at authoring an article for publication in the newsletter. As an editor, Ima possesses talent in wordsmithing and is a stickler for APA format as well as grammar and spelling. Her efforts helped to create a professional newsletter time after time.

Ima has stepped down as the co-editor of CCONS Update but is still a consultant on our committee.

Thank you Ima for all your years of service. Your dedication is appreciated!
**Program Committee**  
Noreen O’Connor, Chair  
Josie Howard-Ruben, Director At Large

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**What You Missed…**

We kicked off the 2013 year with an amazing turn out at Shaw’s Crab House on Hubbard. On February 21st, 2013 Stephanie Mellon-Reppen, ARNP presented ‘The Unmet Need in Hodgkin’s Lymphoma and Systemic Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma and a Clinical Overview of ADCETRIS’ to over 70 nurses. She reviewed the clinical benefits of ADCETRIS and nursing considerations when using this therapy. We gratefully acknowledge Seattle Genetics for their sponsorship of this non-CE educational opportunity.

**Volunteers…** If you are interested in joining this committee, please email Noreen at noconno@gmail.com

**Program Committee Members**

Carol Blendowski  
Kathy Bonnefoi  
Carol Flanagan  
Barb Kinast  
Lynn MacMillan  
Pam Nosse  
Noreen O’Connor  
Marge Pierce  
Katharine Szubski  
Josie Howard Ruben  
Teresa Yang

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Scenes from the July 2012 Vendor Fair. Don’t miss this year’s Vendor Fair on July 18, 2013!
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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| **Thursday, March 14th, 2013** | Treatment Option for the Prevention of Skeletal Related Events (SREs) in Patients with Bone Metastases and the Nurse’s Role.  
Non-CE program sponsored by ONS Edge and Amgen, Inc.  
McCormick &Schmicks  
One East Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60601 |
| **Thursday, May 16, 2013** | LIFE Living in the Future: Cancer Survivorship  
CE program  
Frank Auditorium in Evanston IL  
Presented by Carol Rosenberg, MD, FACP & Carol Flanagan RN, MSN, OCN  
Light dinner will be provided |
| **Thursday, July 18th, 2013** | Annual Exhibitor’s Fair and Dinner Program  
A Journey from Practice to Health Care Policy  
CE Program  
Presented by Janice Philips, PhD, RN, FAAN |
| September 2013     | Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Administration for Autoimmune Diseases  
CE program  
Presented by Erik Zach, RN |
| October 2013       | Taking Things Personally: A New Age of Medicine  
CE Program  
Northwestern Campus in Chicago, IL |

Our meetings are from 6:00 - 8:30 PM  
CEU’s will be offered at noted meetings  
Buffet dinner, social networking, chapter business meeting, and an educational presentation will be provided.
At this year’s fall membership meeting, CCONS recognized many members for their dedication to the nursing practice. Congratulations to all of the recipients of the CCONS 2012 membership awards!

Career Development Award: Mary Ellyn Witt, RN, MSN, AOCN

Mary Ellyn is a Clinical Research Nurse at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Through her research, Mary Ellyn discovered a lack of fluoride tray use by head and neck cancer survivors and has been instrumental in altering the patient education approach to fluoride tray adherence. Mary Ellyn has demonstrated her dental preservation findings to health care professionals at a University of Chicago Quality Fair, an EONS conference in Geneva, Switzerland, and at an ONS radiation e-conference. She intends to use the scholarship money awarded to her to support continuation of her patient and professional education.

Career Development Award: Kathleen Bonnefoi, MSN, AOCNS

Kathleen is a surgical oncology nurse at NorthShore University Health System and has a goal of becoming a Certified Breast Care Nurse. In her current role, Kathleen serves a large population of breast cancer patients and hopes to increase her expertise in this area. Kathleen intends to use the money that has been awarded to her to pay for her enrollment in an ONS online breast care course as her initial step toward further breast care certification.

Nursing Education Scholarship: Anne Marie Keenan, MSN, APRN, AOCN

Anne Marie has worked in oncology since 1983 as an advanced practice nurse and educator. Her research focuses on genetic processes and neoplasms. Anne Marie’s interests fall in the areas of stem cell transplant for hematological malignancies, management of cancer pain and infection, and carcinogenesis. She is currently enrolled as a part time student in the Rush University College of Nursing PhD program.

Nursing Education Scholarship: Erik Zack, RN, MSN, ACCNP, DNP

Erik is a staff nurse on a hematology stem cell transplant unit at Rush University Medical Center and has practiced as a bedside nurse for over 15 years. He completed his DNP at Rush University in December 2012. Erik’s focus is the standardization of safe handling practices of hazardous drugs. Erik has recently authored the CJON article, Chemotherapy and Biotherapeutic Agents for Autoimmune Diseases, as part of his study efforts.

(Continued on page 21)
Undergraduate Nursing Education Scholarship: Rachel Ridgeway, MSN

Rachel is currently enrolled as a General Entry Master’s student at Rush University. Oncology nursing became appealing to Rachel after dealing with several cancer related issues within her own family over the years. Her professional goals are to provide high quality cancer care, to understand the complexities of cancer interventions, and to assist patients in achieving quality of life and optimal health.

Sandy Purl Spirit of CCONS Award - Katherine Szubski

Katharine worked with Sandy Purl for many years at Oncology Specialists in Park Ridge. Sandy was a mentor to her and motivated her to join CCONS and become involved in the program committee. Katharine continues to be guided by the memory of Sandy and remembers her presence fondly, especially the sound of her Ferragamo’s coming down the hall at Oncology Specialists.

Newsletter Award - Ann Cuvala

Ann has almost been a lifelong member of the newsletter committee. As editor for many years, she displayed a passion for the organization, assuring that our members were kept up to date on chapter and national ONS activities. She has continued as the editor for “Focus on Members” where she can take the briefest description of a member’s achievement and add a flair that captures the reader’s attention. She is enthusiastic about the chapter and is passionate about making sure that members’ accomplishments are highlighted. Ann is a loyal and dedicated member of CCONS.

ONS Conference Raffle Winners – Marc Epstein-Reeves, MSN, APNC-NP, ONC and Beth Hurter, MSN, AOCNP

Recertification Awards - Tara Gehring, Lupe Nelson, Karine Otten

Nursing Education Scholarship - Maggie Smith

ONS Congress Raffle - Marc Epstein Reeves and Beth Hurter
In 2011, CCONS received funding from ONS National to support oncology nurses who wished to improve or develop their speaking skills. For each recipient, funding was provided for completion of the ONS Speaker Training Course. A CCONS member volunteered to be the award recipient’s mentor. The final step in the process was a live presentation, created using the skills developed in the course and through the mentor. Funding was also provided for a modest meal at the presentation.

Kanesha Broadwater, a nurse in Radiation Oncology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, was encouraged by her nurse manager to apply for the award. After receiving the award, Kanesha worked with Maggie Smith, CCONS Director at Large and Carol Knop to take the project to completion. On December 11, 2012, Kanesha provided the presentation “Radiation Therapy in the Treatment of Breast Cancer: A Focus on Intraoperative Radiation” to 15 health care professionals at Northwestern. 1.0 hours of CEU was provided for the presentation as well as a continental breakfast.

The response to the presentation was overwhelmingly positive. The information provided was interesting and useful for the participants’ practice. Kanesha proved to be a natural speaker! Here is what Kanesha said about the experience.

During our annual evaluation process, I was asked to set some goals for the upcoming year. I have always considered public speaking a gift that certain people were lucky enough to possess from birth. In recent years, I have been fortunate to meet people who have developed skills in this area and become amazing public speakers. When I decided to make public speaking a goal for the new year, I had no idea where to start. My nurse manager recommended the ONS Speaker Training Course as an avenue to fulfill this goal. The course was easily accessible and the content required the student to draw upon their own experience. In my opinion, the course reinforces that old adage, “Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.” The CCONS Speaker Mentorship Award offered me the preparation and opportunity to delve into this new experience.

I want to thank the CCONS for this amazing opportunity.

Kanesha Broadwater (center) with her supportive co-workers in Radiation Oncology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.
We are pleased to introduce a new feature to the newsletter that highlights the personal stories, ideas, and research of the student members of CCONS. This feature is intended to be a place where future nurses can bring fresh insights and new information for the benefit of all chapter members. For the first installment, co-creators Wendy Froman and Colette Binetti interview one another to give a sense of some of the possible content of the Student Focus feature.

Please take a few minutes to complete an online survey to help us better direct this new feature: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F35MWQN](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F35MWQN)

Colette Binetti  
Rush University  
General Entry Master’s Nursing program  
Graduation Date: March 2013

For Colette Binetti, a student in the General Entry Master’s Nursing program at Rush University, oncology nursing is very personal. “Seven years ago, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and I often act as her advocate when meeting with her health care team. As a health care professional, I hope to witness and be involved in cutting edge technologies that will benefit cancer patients in the future.”

A St. Charles, Illinois native, Colette originally graduated from the University of Kansas with a Bachelor’s of Science in Journalism in 2003. However, after joining the business community and putting her degree to use for several years, she still found something was missing.

“Nursing began to appeal to me because of my experiences dealing with medical issues within my family over many years. My mother was born with cerebral palsy and I have witnessed how she has coped with her handicap. I have learned a great deal about helping her with physical and occupational needs. I have come to realize that I am best suited to a career as a “helping” professional.”

While in a full time Master’s program at Rush University, Colette actively seeks ways to make cancer patient care a focus in her research. “I have designed and implemented a self-care education piece for cancer survivors. Through my research, I have found that fatigue has been reported as one of the most prevalent symptoms reported among cancer patients. Literature supports the need for addressing patient fatigue as an important provision for quality oncology care. My seminar focuses on educating cancer survivors about the exercise guidelines for patients receiving chemotherapy as a means for combating fatigue and improving quality of life.”

Colette joined the Chicago Chapter of ONS in 2012 following encouragement from her academic advisor at Rush, quickly assuming a role on the Newsletter Committee. After her graduation in March of 2013 and passing her NCLEX examination, she plans to begin bedside work with cancer patients. Eventually Colette would like to move toward discharge planning and outpatient care, while continuing to share her self-care education series.

“During the course of my mother’s treatment, I have come to understand and appreciate the intricacies of cancer survivorship. Five years from now I believe that the complexities of cancer and the interventions needed as a necessary part of successful treatment are going to require more collaboration between patients, doctors, and nurses. I feel there will be a need to assist patients in blending medical recommendations with the realities of their lifestyles. Essentially, stronger partnerships are going to be necessary in order to achieve optimal health.”

When asked about her viewpoint on the current generation of nurses, Colette focuses on the need to maintain an up to date evidence basis for best practice. “Healthcare is constantly changing. I think there is a demand for my generation of nurses to stay informed of any healthcare changes and to be a part of quality improvement initiatives that will benefit patient outcomes.”

(Continued on page 24)
Although Colette is inspired by the current body of information student nurses have access to today, she recognizes the privilege of learning from more experienced nurses whose efforts have changed the face of oncology nursing. When asked what questions she would have for an experienced oncology nurse, she narrowed it down to two.

“From your experience, how many years of experience are required at the bedside before fully understanding the basics of oncology care? When would it be appropriate for a newer nurse to move toward outpatient care?” Fortunately for her, CCONS provides the perfect opportunity to ask these and many more questions.

For further information about Colette Binetti’s research or to answer her questions you may email her at cbinetti@gmail.com.

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Wendy Froman
Chamberlain College of Nursing
BSN program
Graduation Date: June 2014

Many healthcare professionals recognize massage as a useful addition to standard medical treatment. For Wendy Froman, a nursing student at Chamberlain College, massage therapy is much more than a complementary treatment. After her high school graduation in a rural farming community in Michigan, Wendy sought an Advanced Body Work Practitioner certification from the Naturopathic Institute.

At one point, a close friend who was being treated for breast cancer asked Wendy to consider giving her massage therapy. Wendy determined that her previous training had not afforded her the ability to focus on cancer-specific therapies. She decided to study with several nationally recognized oncology massage experts. She enrolled in an Outpatient Cancer Massage course at the Florida School of Massage and eventually attended the William Beaumont Hospital’s School of Integrative Medicine to become a Certified Clinical Oncology Massage Therapist.

“It has always been important to me that the therapeutic potential of massage for oncology patients be tempered by a sound evidence base,” says Wendy. Anxious to utilize her new training, she began to work in a hospital setting as the Clinical Oncology Massage Therapist. In this role, nursing started to appeal to her as she realized that her naturopathic background could directly impact patient quality of life. “Nursing is the perfect marriage of science and compassion that I’ve always been seeking,” comments Wendy.

Once she successfully becomes a registered nurse, Wendy intends to work in an outpatient center where she can build strong relationships with clients as she follows their progress through the complexities of today’s healthcare system. She hopes to specialize in breast cancer care as part of her professional goal. In the near future, she would like to conduct a study involving the effects that manual therapy has on chemo-induced peripheral neuropathy. She believes that her background, in combination with her nursing goals, will be beneficial to the future of the profession as naturopathic measures gain traction in the field of oncology. As she continues her nursing journey, she hopes to receive new graduate job placement guidance from confident oncology nurses.

In 2011, Wendy was recognized by Chamberlain College for academic excellence and was the recipient of the school’s Nightingale Award. In 2012, she was selected as the Illinois Nurses’ Foundation Sonne Scholar. Wendy is currently an active member of the National Student Nursing Association and also a Patient Navigator Volunteer for the American Cancer Society. “Working with a Nurse Navigator and with many cancer patients has really opened my eyes to the breadth of resources it takes to meet the needs of those patients. I feel that knowing what free resources are available to my patients will be a huge help to them going forward,” says Wendy.

To learn more about Wendy’s research ideas or to offer advice, email her at WLFroma@gmail.com.
Generations is intended to serve as a sister article to Student Focus. The two articles are constructed to work in tandem in order to meet members in each phase of their journey with oncology nursing. The term “generations” does not refer to age but rather the perspective of each graduating class of nurses, many of whom range widely in age. Generations shares the voice of the more experienced oncology nurse. The feature is a place for each nurse to share their own unique story: From the first days as a nurse to the changes seen within oncology nursing as a whole. Surveys will be emailed quarterly asking for input to the newsletter.

If you are interested in being interviewed for Generations please email Wendy Froman at WLFroman@gmail.com

Regional ONS Chapter Contacts
Below are the contacts for regional ONS Chapters membership meeting information.

Chicago Western Suburbs Chapter ONS
Meetings held quarterly
Jeffrey Coleman
J Coleman@comcast.net

Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter ONS
Lynn Czaplewski
lczaplew@columbia-stmarys.org
and
Mary Ann Biederwolf
mabieder@gmail.com

Northern Fox Valley Chapter ONS
Meetings held 3rd Tuesday of each month
March through November
programs@onsfoxvalley.org

Northwest Indiana Chapter ONS
Meetings held 4th Monday of most months
Lisa Crabtree
lcrabtree1967@yahoo.com
EDITOR’S MESSAGE

Hello and welcome to the 2013 CCONS Update. We are excited about the upcoming year with many new and fresh faces on the committee. You can see the list of members on the bottom left of this page.

You will notice a couple of new features: the “Student Feature” designed to give us a look at what students are up to these days and “Generations”, a new column for experienced seasoned nurses to share with those newer to the profession of oncology nursing. Please look for the surveys via e-blast every quarter and share your thoughts.

Please be sure to respond to the surveys that will be sent out via e-blast and share with us what’s going on in your professional or personal life. This replaces the forms that circulated at membership meetings in the past.

We are always looking for new authors and ideas for articles. Please feel free to email me and the new co-editor, Mary Ellyn Witt.

Happy Winter!

Carol

Editorial Board

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cknop@nmff.org
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mwitt@radonc.uchicago.edu

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Ann Cuvala
Wendy Froman
Ima Garcia
Josie Howard-Ruben
Mary Phelan Lappe
Beth Vaclavik
Carol White
# 2013 CCONS
## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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2013 CCONS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ONS# (required for CCONS membership): _____________
Expiration Date (required): _____________

No membership will be processed without the required ONS# and expiration date

Membership Category: _____ New Member _____ Renewal _____ Retired
_____ Student _____ Physically challenged

Recruited by: ________________________________________________________________

MAILING ADDRESS

Name (please include all credentials): ____________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________________

City: ________________________________________________________________________

State: ___ Zip Code___________ Preferred Phone Number__________________________

Email: ______________________________________________________________________

Are you on Facebook? Yes_____ No_______

Place of employment: __________________________________________________________

Years in Nursing___________ Years in Oncology Nursing___________

Specialty area: _____________________ Inpatient_____ Outpatient_____

Initializing here indicates my permission to use a photo with my image for purposes
connected to CCONS________________

Interested in being active in a CCONS committee:
_____ Program _____ Membership
_____ Research _____ Newsletter _____ Nominating

Dues are $25 (student, physically challenged, or retired is $10) payable to CCONS. Mail
fees to CCONS, PO BOX 11073, Chicago, IL 60611. Membership is valid January 1 through
December 31, 2013. PLEASE COMPLETE ALL FIELDS!!