

# The Oncology Nursing Society Leadership Competency Project: Developing a Road Map to Professional Excellence

Donald D. Day, RN, MSN-L, Mikel W. Hand, EdD, RN, NE-BC, NEA-BC, OCN®, Ann R. Jones, RN, MS, MBA, AOCN®, FACHE, Nancy Kay Harrington, RN, MS, BSN, OCN®, Robyn Best, BSN, MSL, RN, OCN®, and Kristine B. LeFebvre, MSN, RN, AOCN®



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Combining the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine's report on the future of nursing, an Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) leadership think tank, and current evidence, the ONS Leadership Competencies were developed to provide all nurses with a pathway to advance their leadership skills and abilities. Generated through a systematic approach of literature review, data synthesis, and peer and expert review, the ONS Leadership Competencies are divided into five domains: vision, knowledge, interpersonal effectiveness, systems thinking, and personal mastery. Each of the competencies can be measured at the individual, group, and governance levels. They serve as a means of self-assessment, growth, future planning, and professional development. This article describes the process used to develop the ONS Leadership Competencies and offers examples of how they may be used in practice.

Donald D. Day, RN, MSN-L, is a clinical director at Scottsdale Healthcare in Arizona; Mikel W. Hand, EdD, RN, NE-BC, NEA-BC, OCN®, is an assistant professor of nursing in the College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville; Ann R. Jones, RN, MS, MBA, AOCN®, FACHE, is an oncology healthcare consultant at Health Forward, LLC, in Council Bluffs, IA; Nancy Kay Harrington, RN, MS, BSN, OCN®, is a clinical leader at the University of Arizona Health Network in Tucson; Robyn Best, BSN, MSL, RN, OCN®, is a clinical manager at West Penn Allegheny Oncology Network in Pittsburgh, PA; and Kristine B. LeFebvre, MSN, RN, AOCN®, is an oncology clinical specialist at the Oncology Nursing Society in Pittsburgh. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the article. Development of the ONS Leadership Competencies was made possible through the financial support of an ONS Foundation endowment and the Oncology Nursing Society. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Oncology Nursing Society. The content of this article has been reviewed by independent peer reviewers to ensure that it is balanced, objective, and free from commercial bias. No financial relationships relevant to the content of this article have been disclosed by the independent peer reviewers or editorial staff. Day can be reached at dday@shc.org, with copy to editor at CJONEditor@ons.org. (Submitted October 2013. Revision submitted December 2013. Accepted for publication December 8, 2013.)

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**A** long-held stance of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) is that every nurse is a leader. Whether the nurse is working at the bedside, as an administrator, or serving on the board of directors for a national organization, leadership skills are integral in the work of the oncology nurse. In addition to the role of direct care provider, the nurse routinely serves in the roles of advocate, change agent, and fiduciary steward. Effective nurse leaders are needed to help the system cope with the continual changes facing health care and cancer care, and to build a solid future for the nursing profession.

In 2010, the Institute of Medicine's ([IOM's], 2010) report brief, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, addressed the need to develop nurses. As the largest profession of healthcare workers in the United States and at the forefront of patient care, nurses must be leaders and ad-

vocates for high-quality health care and serve as full partners with other health professionals. The responsibility for leadership development lies not only with schools of nursing and individual healthcare institutions, but also with professional associations that can research strategies, develop programs that address the need, and integrate it into clinical education (IOM, 2010).

As a professional organization, ONS has a vested interest in developing individual leaders to prepare for future changes in cancer nursing care, nursing education, and research. Members have participated in educational offerings in leadership, as well as taken the opportunity to grow professionally through publication, research, and clinical and organizational leadership. Educational programs include the Leadership Development Institute (offered from 1998–2011), the leadership development online course (which began in 2012), and the Leadership Workshop,