



Oncology Nursing Society

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oncology Nursing Society Hosts Meeting of Safe Handling of Hazardous Drugs Association Stakeholders

Nursing and Professional Association Representatives Share Members' Concerns

PITTSBURGH, PA – March 10, 2015 – The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), recently hosted a Safe Handling of Hazardous Drugs Association Stakeholders meeting in Washington, DC. The purpose of the meeting was to outline key issues in the implementation of standards followed in the safe handling of hazardous drugs and to provide consensus recommendations regarding the implementation of the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention's General Chapter <800> Hazardous Drugs – Handling in Healthcare Settings.

Attendees had the opportunity to voice the concerns of their membership regarding safe handling. Nursing and professional associations represented included:

- American Society of Clinical Oncology
- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
- Association of Community Cancer Centers
- Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses
- Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association

A joint position statement was developed and approved by ONS, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), and the Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA) that outlines strategies to protect healthcare workers. The stakeholders will continue to work together to encourage safety in the healthcare environment.

"We cannot take the safety of healthcare professionals and the patients they serve for granted," said Margaret Barton-Burke, PhD, RN, FAAN, president of ONS. "The importance of promoting and providing education and resources to achieve a safe environment cannot be underestimated."

"Nurses should not have to risk their health and safety when caring for patients who are receiving chemotherapy," said Martha Polovich, PhD, RN, AOCN®, Clinical Associate Professor, Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions at Georgia State University. "Yet healthcare is the only industry in the U.S. where protection against exposure to carcinogens is optional. Nurses should share the position with their colleagues and employers and use the statement as a basis for creating a safer workplace." Polovich led the group that developed the joint position statement.

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“The safety of our workers and the patients they care for is of utmost importance,” said ASCO President Peter P. Yu, MD, FACP, FASCO. “With this framework, our societies join forces to support our respective members in ensuring a safe environment for their colleagues and the patients and families they serve.”

“It is important for organizations to take every opportunity to evaluate and improve their practices for handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous drugs,” says Michael Vozniak, PharmD, BCOP, president of the Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association. “Education is paramount to maintaining safe practices and minimizing exposure to healthcare workers, patients and families.”

About ASCO

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world’s leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With more than 35,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. ASCO is supported by its affiliate organization, the Conquer Cancer Foundation, which funds ground-breaking research and programs that make a tangible difference in the lives of people with cancer. For ASCO information and resources, visit www.asco.org. Patient-oriented cancer information is available at www.Cancer.Net.

About HOPA

HOPA is a nonprofit professional organization formed in 2004 to help oncology and hematology pharmacy practitioners and their associates provide the best possible cancer care. HOPA supports research, provides education to advance knowledge, encourages professional development and advocates for health policy issues that improve patient care. HOPA’s membership includes oncology pharmacists, as well as pharmacy interns, residents, technicians, researchers, and administrators specializing in hematology/oncology practice. For more information, visit www.hoparx.org.

About ONS

ONS is a professional association of more than 35,000 members committed to promoting excellence in oncology nursing and the transformation of cancer care. Since 1975, ONS has provided a professional community for oncology nurses, developed evidence-based education programs and treatment information, and advocated for patient care, all in an effort to improve quality of life and outcomes for patients with cancer and their families. Learn more at www.ons.org.