



Provincial Oncology Nursing Program

Oncology RN Role Description

PURPOSE:

The oncology nurse practices at a high level of autonomy and accountability in collaboration with oncologists and the inter-professional Health-care team to provide a continuum of patient care from prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, follow-up, palliation, bereavement and survivorship.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- The standards set out by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and The Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO) Standards of Care, Roles in Oncology Nursing and Role Competencies represent the minimum expectations for oncology nursing practice.
- The role is based on the CANO competencies which depict the integration of knowledge, skills and judgments expected of a Specialized Oncology Nurse to provide a safe and effective practice environment for the patient and the specialized oncology nurse.
- Oncology nurses from health care facilities providing cancer care will utilize tools and policies and procedures specific to that institution

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

This role demonstrates oncology-nursing expertise in managing disease site focused populations of patients with cancer. The principle responsibilities include:

- **Direct Comprehensive Care**
- **Supportive Care**
- **Navigating The System**
- **Professional Practice**
- **Collaborative Practice**
- **Evidence-Based Practice**

1. Direct Comprehensive Care

Applies an integration of theory, research, experience and practical knowledge in providing holistic care for patients with cancer and their families within maximum scope of practice through protocols, practice guidelines/care paths and medical directives

- Conducts a thorough health assessment of the patient's physical, psychosocial, cultural and spiritual needs by completing a patient history and physical examination
- Formulates and implements a holistic plan of nursing care that is communicated and clarified with the patient/family
- Interprets and organizes sequencing of diagnostic tests and procedures when nursing judgement and expertise is required
- Demonstrates "hands on" clinical skills specific to an area of practice and other job assignments as required
- Identifies clinical presentation and risk factors for oncologic emergencies, implements interventions, and facilitates patient learning associated with self-care strategies
- Effectively manages telephone practice of patient/family and community healthcare professionals to navigate the healthcare system
- Provides care that demonstrates sensitivity to client diversity and incorporates appropriate cultural practices
- Keeps abreast of current clinical trials relevant to her/his patient population and communicates effectively with clinical trials staff to promote continuity of care
- Reviews protocols for clinical trials that may affect her/his patient populations
- Evaluates patient responses to interventions in order to determine progress toward achieving expected outcomes. Modifies the nursing plan of care accordingly
- Provides a comprehensive report when transferring accountability of a patient's care to another nurse and/or facility
- Documents/dictates patient history, physical examination data, nursing care plan and interventions, and the clients' responses in the client's record in a timely manner in accordance with the CNO Standards, CCO's Oncology Nursing Documentation Competencies and established organizational documentation standards

2. Supportive Care

Provides holistic nursing care to meet the emotional, psychological, informational, spiritual and practical needs of patients throughout the spectrum of cancer care

- Establishes a caring and therapeutic relationship with patients demonstrating trust, respect and honesty
- Demonstrates excellent communication skills during all phases of the therapeutic relationship
- Creates an environment of support by listening attentively and offering support and confidentiality
- Demonstrates the ability of "being there" for the patient throughout their illness experience by acknowledging the patient's reality and encouraging hope
- Assists the patient to identify psychosocial needs and concerns; and offers appropriate resources through information provision, education and referral
- Demonstrates counselling skills in assisting patient and family with coping mechanisms throughout the continuum of care from diagnosis to survivorship/end of life
- Continually evaluates effectiveness of patient's care in relation to quality of life and expected outcomes and modifies plan and nursing interventions as necessary

3. Navigating The System

Navigation is used to denote a professional role intended primarily to expedite access to services and resources, and to improve continuity and coordination of care throughout the cancer continuum. The oncology nurse acts as a proactive guide to help cancer patients navigate the complex maze of cancer treatment and care. The nurse empowers the patient and family by providing information and education to facilitate decision making in order to enhance the patient's choice of the best alternatives of care tailored to their individual needs.

- Understands the impact of the cancer experience and strategizes when and how to best guide the patient and family throughout the cancer treatments. The oncology nurse will assess the patient's needs, establish a therapeutic relationship, and teach, counsel and support the individual and family through the continuum of care.
- Develops a collaborative partnership with the patient and their family that is respectful of their needs, wishes, knowledge, experience, values and beliefs
- Knowledgeable about the resources provided by the cancer care program at their institution and in the community
- Follows the process of patient education which consists of: assessment of need; statement of learning need; development of learning objectives with patient; implementation of teaching; and evaluation of learning
- Provides health counselling, navigation through treatment and interpretation of written as well as media/web based patient resources
- Plans, delivers and evaluates education directly or on a consultative basis for individual and/or groups of patients with cancer and their families in partnership with the inter-professional Health-care team
- Applies evidence based practice in the development of teaching tools / programs
- Advocates for the patient and family by mobilizing appropriate resources tailored to the individual patient's care in a timely fashion. Identifies gaps in service and addresses them
- Organizes the inter-professional plan of care with other services and team members, as required to facilitate the seamless movement of the patient through the healthcare system.
- Translates medical language and procedures for the patient and family by using language that is appropriate to the patient.

4. Professional Practice

Nurses are accountable for their own decision-making and actions, and maintaining competence to facilitate the best possible outcomes for patients

- Participates in professional and specialty nursing organizations
- Participates in deSouza Institute educational opportunities
- Supports development of and participates in clinically relevant research, committee and project work
- Advocates for and supports the development, implementation and evaluation of quality improvement initiatives (policy & procedure changes, standards, protocols, clinical pathways and medical directives)
- Engages in self-appraisal by being proactive and innovative in meeting own learning needs based on patient population and changes in practice

- Performs reflective practice, which includes the required capacities of self-awareness, self-knowledge, empathy, awareness of boundaries and maximum scope of the professional role
- Engages in reflective practice by maintaining knowledge and skills that will enhance/advance her/his/ professional oncology nursing practice
- Recognizes and understands legal obligations related to care of patient with regards to decision making and applies ethical framework to address ethical dilemmas
- Role models for oncology nursing through demonstration of expertise
- Acts as a resource to individuals and groups within hospital and community agencies to improve care and nursing practice
- Acts as a preceptor or mentor to staff/students, providing written or verbal feedback as necessary
- Recognizes ethical dilemmas and works through them using resources and a logical approach
- Demonstrates ethical behavior (i.e. honesty, integrity)
- Recognizes when own values and beliefs conflict with the patient's and is able to demonstrate conflict resolution skills

5. Collaborative Practice

In collaborative practice the oncology nurse and oncologist share in the care of the patient through a complementary relationship which is based on shared decision-making and joint problem solving. Both the oncology nurse and oncologist utilize their skills and expertise to work in partnership with allied health professionals to provide holistic care to the patient and family members.

- Demonstrates an understanding of the scope of practice as a nurse to ensure sound knowledge of role clarity, authority and accountability
- Utilizes strong communication and interpersonal skills to facilitate mutual agreement and acceptance of responsibilities within scope of practice, about shared care and distribution of activities
- Facilitates cost effective care through complementary but non-duplicating roles in collaborative practice
- Ensures the opportunity for the patient and the members of the inter-professional Health-care cancer team to participate collaboratively in the planning, implementation and evaluation of comprehensive patient care
- Provides leadership and coordination in telephone practice to patients, family members and community healthcare professionals as needed
- Demonstrates strong communication skills to work in partnership with the oncologist to promote a trusting and respectful professional relationship
- Demonstrates conflict resolution skills by taking action to resolve conflict and develops innovative solutions to practice issues in partnership with the oncologist and other members of the inter-professional Health-care team
- Demonstrates the ability to prioritize and evaluate learning and development of the individual oncology nurse and oncologist to promote team function and the best possible outcome for the patient

6. Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

EBP is the conscientious use of current best evidence from health care research in making decisions about the health care of patients. The oncology nurse participates in evidence-based practice in order to facilitate the best possible outcomes for patients.

- Demonstrates knowledge relevant to her/his professional practice by providing theoretical or scientific (physiological and/or psychosocial) rationale
- Applies her/his current knowledge base and critical thinking skills to comprehensively identify knowledge gaps and practice issues which demonstrates an understanding of and engagement in the following five steps of evidence-based practice:
 - a. Demonstrates an ability to formulate an answerable question, which is clinically relevant.
 - b. Selects and executes a rigorous search strategy to identify the best quantitative and qualitative evidence.
 - c. Critically appraises the strength of the research evidence for its validity and relevance to clinical practice and the patient population.
 - d. Disseminates his/her findings to the primary team(s), integrating the evidence with his/her clinical expertise and the patient's unique values and circumstances as appropriate.
 - e. Evaluates effectiveness of intervention in attaining the desired patient outcomes.
- Participates in nursing research initiatives

QUALIFICATIONS:

- CON(C) certification preferred or achieved within a prescribed time period as described by the institution;
- completion of relevant de Souza courses preferred
- Current registration with the College of Nurses of Ontario;
- BScN/BN preferred;
- Computer skills an asset;
- Current B.C.L.S. certificate;
- Additional competencies in specialized areas may be required.

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