



ASSOCIATION *of* PEDIATRIC
HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY NURSES

APHON Position Paper on Educating the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurse

Authors

Deborah Echtenkamp, MSN RN CPON[®]
Monica McMath, BS RN CPON[®]

Reviewers

Kathleen Adlard, MS RN CPNP CPON[®]
Lisa Fisher, MSN RN CPON[®]
Jami S. Gattuso, MSN RN CPON[®]
Joy Hesselgrave, RN CPON[®]
Robin McCune, RN CPON[®]
Colleen Nixon, MSN RN CPON[®]
Joan O'Brien-Shea, MSN RN CPON[®]
Kathy Perko, MS RN PNP CPON[®]
Cindy Stutzer, MS RN
Nancy Tena, MSN RN, CNS-BC CPON[®]

Healthcare is in a constant state of change, with advances in science and technology occurring at a frenetic pace. Because of this, pediatric hematology/oncology nurses require a solid educational foundation in how best to care for their patients' complex needs and the ability to rapidly integrate this acquired knowledge into their clinical practice. In addition, there are a myriad of challenges affecting the development of expert pediatric hematology/oncology nurses. Significant nursing shortages are expected to continue through the next decade (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). Within the workplace, there are multigenerational issues complicating the way nurses communicate, practice, and learn. (Rose, 2006). To address the nursing shortage, institutions are hiring newly graduated nurses to begin their practice in specialty nursing units, such as pediatric hematology/oncology (Linder, 2009). Within baccalaureate and associate degree nursing programs, there has been a decline in the content and clinical experiences related to child/family health care (Society of Pediatric Nurses, 2007). At a time when more newly graduated nurses are being hired, they are seemingly less prepared to care for pediatric hematology/oncology patients and their families. As a result, healthcare institutions and organizations must commit to educating and mentoring nurses in order to ensure pediatric hematology/oncology patients and their families receive

compassionate, evidence-based, high-quality care. The Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON) believes that all children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer and blood disorders must be cared for by appropriately educated and skilled pediatric hematology/oncology nurses. As reflected in the APHON *Scope and Standards of Practice* (Nelson et al., 2007; Hennessey, 2009 p.6), pediatric hematology/oncology nurses must be “dedicated to providing safe, expert evidence-based nursing care for children with hematologic and oncologic diagnoses, and their families.”

It is the position of APHON that

- all children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer and blood disorders as well as their families have an expert pediatric hematology/oncology nurse direct their care.
- nurses caring for pediatric hematology/oncology patients “demonstrate clinical knowledge and competency in pediatric hematology/oncology nursing practice” (Nelson et al., 2007; Hennessey, 2009 p.6).
- pediatric hematology/oncology nurses pursue continuing education opportunities and commit to being lifelong learners.
- nurses administering chemotherapy and biotherapy to children, adolescents, and young adults successfully complete APHON’s Pediatric Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Provider course, followed by institution-specific clinical skills validation. Provider status should be renewed according to APHON requirements.
- pediatric hematology/oncology nurses seek certification after eligibility criteria is met.
- institutions commit to providing
 - highly effective pediatric hematology/oncology-focused orientation programs such as APHON’s Foundations series for newly hired staff along with requisite competency validation to ensure high-quality nursing care for pediatric hematology/oncology patients
 - ongoing maintenance of nursing competency through continuing education and skills evaluation
 - comprehensive staff support programs that recognize well developed critical thinking and coping skills are as important as knowledge acquisition in the development of highly skilled pediatric hematology/oncology nurses.

Education Programs

APHON recommends that education programs be developed based on the nurse’s experience level and be tailored to identified needs and learning styles.

It is the position of APHON that

- nurses caring for pediatric hematology/oncology patients participate in comprehensive knowledge-based programs and complete skills validation to ensure competent care is provided.
- experienced pediatric hematology/oncology nurses
 - complete unit/job-specific orientation (length to be determined by needs assessment or hospital policy)
 - complete APHON's Pediatric Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Provider program as needed
 - complete a clinical practicum with skills validation
 - complete End of Life Nursing Education Curriculum (ELNEC), as needed
 - based on unit/work area population, complete as needed
 - APHON/PBMTC's *Foundations of Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation: A Core Curriculum*
 - APHON's *Foundations of Pediatric Hematology Nursing: A Comprehensive Orientation and Review Course*
 - participate in lifelong learning through continuing education programs
 - obtain certified pediatric hematology/oncology nursing (CPHON[®]) status when eligibility requirements are met.
- newly graduated nurses or experienced registered nurses new to pediatric hematology/oncology
 - attend a general clinic or hospital orientation
 - complete unit/job-specific orientation (length to be determined by needs assessment or hospital policy)
 - complete APHON's *Foundations of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nursing: A Comprehensive Orientation and Review Course*
 - complete APHON's *Pediatric Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Provider program*
 - complete a clinical practicum with skills validation
 - complete ELNEC education.
 - based on unit/work area population, complete
 - APHON's *Foundations of Pediatric Hematology Nursing: A Comprehensive Orientation and Review Course*
 - APHON's *Foundations of Pediatric Hematology Nursing: A Comprehensive Orientation and Review Course*
 - APHON/PBMTC's *Foundations of Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation: A Core Curriculum*
 - participate in lifelong learning through continuing education programs
 - obtain CPHON[®] status when eligibility requirements are met.

References

Linder, L. (2009). Experiences of pediatric oncology nurses: The first year of hire. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, 26(1), 29–40.

Hennessy, J. (2009). *Pediatric hematology nursing: Scope and standards of practice*. Glenview, IL: Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses.

Nelson, M. B., Forte, K., Freiburg, D., Hooke, M. C., Kelly, K. P., & O'Neill, J. B. (2007). *Pediatric oncology nursing: Scope and standards of practice*. Glenview, IL: Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses.

Sherman, R. (2006). Leading a multigenerational nursing workforce: Issues, challenges, and strategies. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 11(2), 13. Retrieved March 29, 2010, from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.apollolibrary.com/ehost/delivery?vid=12&hid=112&sid>.

Society of Pediatric Nurses. (2007). *Position Statement on child health content in the undergraduate curriculum*. Retrieved March 29, 2010, from www.pedsnurses.org/component/options,com_docman/Itemid,117/task,doc_view/gid102/

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Service Administration. (2007). *Projected number of and demand for licensed registered nurses, 2000-2020*. Retrieved March 29, 2010, from <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/nursing>.

Bibliography

Andam, R. & Silva, M. (2008). A journey to pediatric chemotherapy competence. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 23(4), 257–268.

Benner, P. (1984). *From novice to expert: Excellence and power in clinical nursing practice*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Dailey, B. (2009). Eyes wide open: Recognizing new graduate nurse fears. *APHON Counts*, 23(3), 1, 18.

Itano, J., Pierce, M., Masten, K., & Whitley, M. (1992). Developing the oncology nurse from novice to expert. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 19(8), 1233–1241.

Mosher, R. (2008). Standards of Pediatric Oncology Nursing. In N. Kline (Ed.), *Essentials of pediatric hematology/oncology nursing: A core curriculum* (3rd ed., pp. 4–6). Glenview, IL: Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses.

Oncology Nursing Society Position. (2007). *Education of the RN who administers and cares for the individual receiving chemotherapy and biotherapy*. Pittsburgh, PA: Oncology Nursing Society.

Oncology Nursing Society Position. (2006). *Oncology certification for nurses*. Pittsburgh, PA: Oncology Nursing Society.

Spears, P., Thornton, D, & Long, L. (2008). Journey to nursing excellence: Building partnerships for success. *Nurse Leader*, June, 59–66. (doi:10.1016/j.mnl.2008.04.009).

Wallace, J. (2008). Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses. In N. Kline (Ed.) *Essentials of pediatric hematology/oncology nursing: A core curriculum*, (3rd ed., pp. 6–8). Glenview, IL: Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses.

Warise, L. & Green, A. (2008). Determining perceived learning needs of newly employed pediatric oncology registered nurses. *Journal for Nurses in Staff Development*, 24(2), 69–74.

Disclaimer

The Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON) publishes its position statements as a service to promote the awareness of certain issues to its members. The information contained in the position statement is neither exhaustive nor exclusive to all circumstances or individuals. Variables such as institutional human resource guidelines, state or federal statutes, rules, or regulations, as well as regional environmental conditions, may impact the relevance and implementation of these recommendations. APHON advises its members and others to carefully and independently consider each of the recommendations (including the applicability of same to any particular circumstance or individual). The position statement should not be relied upon as an independent basis for care, but rather as a resource available to APHON members or others. Moreover, no opinion is expressed herein regarding the quality of care that adheres to or differs from APHON position statements. APHON reserves the right to rescind or modify its position statements at any time.