

# BIENNIAL REPORT REGIONAL ONCOLOGY NURSING COUNCIL OF SOUTHEASTERN ONTARIO

REGIONAL  
ONCOLOGY  
NURSING  
COUNCIL

*of Southeastern Ontario*

APRIL 2005



## OUR MISSION

To advise and collaborate with the Vice President, Regional Cancer Program, Chief Nursing Officer - Cancer Care Ontario and Chief Nursing Officers of partner relationships on regional oncology nursing practice, education, leadership and research issues / initiatives for all patient populations along the continuum of cancer care (genetics, prevention, screening, diagnoses, treatment, follow-up, after-care, rehabilitation and palliation).

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The Cancer Centre of Southeastern Ontario (SEO) at the Kingston General Hospital is a partner of Cancer Care Ontario (CCO).

CCO released the first Ontario Cancer Plan in November 2004 identifying six priority areas necessary to drive improvement in access to quality care for cancer patients. The plan proposes activities to strengthen the development and use of guidelines and standards across the province and to integrate and coordinate services through regional cancer programs.

Currently, the organization and delivery of specialized cancer services is fragmented and not well coordinated. There are discrepancies between existing practice standards and actual care delivery. Throughout the region registered nurses are

providing cancer care, however, there are nursing practice variations across the care continuum. The oncology nurse's role is critical to the safe delivery of care that involves: coordination and communication, assessment and management of symptoms, administration of treatment (chemotherapy, biotherapy, hormone therapy, supportive therapies) and identification of cancer and treatment-related oncological emergencies (e.g. febrile neutropenia).

Nurses do not always have access to the most up-to-date or in depth information / education to support them in their practice to deliver patient care based on evidence and safety standards.

The Regional Oncology Nursing Council of Southeastern Ontario (RONC-SEO) was implemented to support oncology nurses across the care continuum and to enhance patient care. Critical to the council's success is the commitment of the council members and agencies and the willingness to break down the silos within our discipline.

*Linda Robb-Blenderman, Chair*

## RONC-SEO TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Provide regional oncology nursing leadership in practice, education and research.
2. Participate in the development of evidenced-based practice

guidelines (EBPG) and implement existing EBPG for oncology consistent with the Nursing Professional Advisory Committee of CCO.

3. Develop oncology nursing expertise in the region consistent with the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO) Standards of Care, Roles and Competencies.
4. Participate in the development of a model for coordination of care, continuity of care and collaboration across the region for cancer patients and families.
5. Generate new knowledge in oncology nursing through collaboration and participation in research.
6. Utilize quality indicators across the region to assess the impact on patient outcomes.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMENTS

"Belonging to the RONC-SEO has provided me with a forum to discuss professional practice issues and research opportunities with my colleagues throughout the region. Networking with other nurses has helped me to come up with creative solutions to improve patient care, and fostered my enthusiasm for oncology nursing and oncology nurses".

*Jane Warner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Breast Assessment Program, Hotel Dieu Hospital.*

"Community home oncology nursing is increasingly complex. Membership on the RONC-SEO has been invaluable for the regional community nursing agencies (All Care, VON, St. Elizabeth's etc.) providing specialized home oncology care. Membership has provided opportunities such as participating in oncology nursing research, collaborating to find solutions for enhancing cancer care and sharing educational resources. The RONC-SEO is leading and fostering oncology nursing excellence across all settings."

*Linda Morgan, Nursing Manager, Oncology Palliative, All Care Health Services.*

"The resource sharing and communication have done much to foster good collaborative working relationships within our Southeastern Ontario Region. Not only can patient satisfaction and outcomes improve but also oncology nursing development and job satisfaction".

*Marilyn Pape, Program Manager of Oncology & Critical Care*

*Jane Palmateer, Charge Nurse, Ambulatory Oncology Clinic, Quinte Health Care Corporation – Belleville General.*

"The support of the council is invaluable to a smaller community such as Cobourg where resources are limited. Being a member of the RONC-SEO puts you in touch with a network of oncology nursing leaders that together, can achieve better care for our patients".

*Brenda Weir, Program Director, Northumberland Hills Hospital.*

"The partnership between the oncology nurses on the RONC-SEO and the nurses working within the Geriatric Psychiatric Services is invaluable. Cancer patients over the age of 60, which is approximately 80%, may also experience a co-morbidity of mental health issues (i.e. depression, delirium)".

*Linda Kessler, Administrative Director of Geriatric Psychiatry Services, PCCC - Mental Health Services.*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Demonstrated leadership in regional oncology nursing excellence.
- Recognized as a leader for developing the first regional oncology nursing council in Ontario.
- Raised profile of Council to CCO through Chief Nursing Officer of CCO.
- Raised profile of Council to Ministry of Health and Long Term Care through Chief Nursing Officer of Ontario.
- Developed a regional oncology nursing research agenda.
- Input provided for the 2004 Provincial Cancer Plan.
- Participant at the Regional Prevention and Screening Strategic Planning Meeting (2003).
- Adopted the adoption of the CANO Patient Care Standards, Roles and Competencies.
- Adopted the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Guidelines and Recommendations for Practice.
- Adopted the ONS Safe Handling of Hazardous Drugs Guidelines.
- Adopted Cancer Care Ontario CCO Telephone Nursing Practice & Symptom Management Guidelines.
- Raised profile and facilitated opportunities to engage regional nurses across settings in oncology nursing research.
- Participants in Regional Palliative and End-of-Life Planning.
- Support provided for the South Eastern Ontario Palliative Care Integration Project with the MOHLTC.
- Improved regional communication and information sharing with CCO

and the Paediatric Oncology Group of Ontario.

- CCO Provincial Oncology Nursing Rounds-Successfully lobbied for all regional nurses to have access to the presentations.
- Website launched on April 19, 2005.

## PRESENTATIONS

- RNAO 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial International Conference on Nursing Best Practice Guidelines (June 2003)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Annual CANO Conference (October 2003)
- OHA Convention - National Best Practices Display (November 2003)
- CCO Provincial Oncology Nursing Rounds (November 2003)
- Nursing Research Conference, Kingston (June 2004)
- Abstracts (2) submitted to the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual CANO Conference (January 2005)

## INITIATIVES IN PROGRESS

- Implementation of CANO Standards of Care, Roles and Competencies.
- 2005 Registered Nurses Learning Needs Survey for Nurses working across the cancer care continuum.
- Implementation of Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Guidelines and Recommendation of Practice.
- Implementation of Safe Handling of Hazardous Drug Guidelines.
- Implementation of Telephone Nursing Practice Symptom Management Guidelines.
- Participation in the development of a Fatigue Collaborative Care plan with members of the Palliative Care Integration Project.
- Beginning stages of collaboration with Regional Colleges and Universities on regional curriculum development for Post-RN Oncology Nursing Education.

- Exploring implementing a Community of Oncology Nursing Practice for Regional Cancer Treatment e.g. systemic therapy, radiotherapy.
- Participants on the CCO Expert Panel on Oncology Nursing Sensitive Outcomes (**Dr. Joan Tranmer and Linda Robb Blenderman**) represent the RONC and SEO).

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF NURSING OFFICER, CANCER CARE ONTARIO

The Regional Oncology Nursing Council of Southeastern Ontario is unique in Ontario. With leadership from **Linda Robb-Blenderman**, this is the first such community of practice to be established with a focus on oncology nursing contributions to cancer patients and their families. The RONC-SEO serves as a model for other regional cancer programs in the province, and as Chief Nursing Officer, I have directed leaders in other programs to this model.

This excellent model has brought together what might have been 'disparate' groups, who have a common focus and similar needs. That is one reason why this council is so effective; it allows this community to focus collaboratively on common issues, offer advice and support across the region, and serves as a consultation to all of the partners. The opportunity to work in collaboration has meant that projects are focused and directed. An example is the collaborative research projects undertaken with **Dr. Joan Tranmer's** leadership, to assess the factors that support or burden elderly cancer patients. The interest in development of practice promoted an opportunity to work in collaboration with pediatric oncology nurses in relation to a guideline on central venous

device management. This has become a provincial initiative, with the support from the Program in Evidence-based Care, but the impetus came from the members of the RONC-SEO, who are members of the guideline development.

The RONC-SEO model is one that can be implemented in other regional programs. With the framework of regional cancer programs underway, there is a distinct advantage that south-east Ontario has in relation to being 'miles ahead' of the other regions in Ontario.

I commend **Linda Robb-Blenderman** and her colleagues in southeast Ontario for their vision and implementation. **Esther Green**, *Chief Nursing Officer and Director, Health Human Resource Planning, Cancer Care Ontario*

## LEARNING NEEDS SURVEY

Inconsistencies in levels of oncology nursing knowledge and expertise were identified as a priority for the Council. The 2005 Registered Nurses Learning Needs Survey will be implemented regionally May 2.

The goals of the survey are to:

1. Identify the learning needs of oncology nurses in our region
2. Identify preferred methods of learning of oncology nurses
3. Influence regional curricula for oncology nursing education
4. Improve access for oncology nurses to educational materials and tools

Investigative team members are: PI-**Linda Robb Blenderman**, Cancer Centre of Southeastern Ontario at Kingston General Hospital  
Co-I-**Dr. Margareth Zanchetta**, Queen's University  
Co-I-**Brenda Weir**, Northumberland Hills Hospital

Co-I-**Linda Morgan**, AllCare Health Services LTD.  
Co-I-**Jane Warner**, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston.

## FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FUNCTIONAL WELL-BEING IN OLDER PERSONS LIVING WITH CANCER

A nurse-lead prospective cohort study lead by (**Dr. Joan Tranmer, PI; Linda Robb-Blenderman, Co-I; Esther Green, Co-I**) is in progress to obtain a profile of personal health and social factors associated with functional well-being in older persons diagnosed with cancer. Three hundred and fifty patients, greater than 65 years of age, diagnosed with cancer, attending the Cancer Centre of Southeastern Ontario, have participated in the study to date.

It is anticipated that the information gained from this study will contribute to the sub-specialty of geriatric oncology and future planning of age-sensitive health services for older persons living with cancer.

## RONC-SEO WEBSITE

Launched on April 19, 2005, the Council lobbied and received resources to implement a regional website. The Website will act as a vehicle for knowledge translation, dissemination of information and to support the implementation of regional evidence-based cancer care.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## MEMBERSHIP

**Asselstine, Brenda.** Home & Community Care, Tyendinaga Health Centre, Deseronto.

**Barnes, Melanie.** Victorian Order Of Nurses, Hastings, Northumberland, Prince Edward Branch, Trenton.

**Bass, Brenda.** Regional Administrator Ontario Breast Screening Program-SEO, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Broeders-Morin, Dot.** Manager, St. Elizabeth Health Care, Kingston.

**Burrows, Karen.** Resource Nurse-Oncology/Palliative Care, Perth/Smiths Falls District Hospital, Smiths Falls.

**Closs, Cathy.** Chief Nursing Officer, Corrections Canada, Kingston.

**Coulson, Kathy.** Advanced Practice Nurse, Palliative Care, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Cowperwaithe, Bernadette.** Gynecological-Oncology Liaison Nurse, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Debruyn, Margriet.** Program Manager, Brockville General Hospital, Brockville

**Duhn, Gwen.** Faculty Nursing Science Program, St. Lawrence College, Kingston.

**Gibson, Maryanne.** Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario-Nurse Representative, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Giles, Linda.** Cancer Program Manager, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Green, Esther.** Chief Nursing Officer & Director of Health Human Resource Planning, Cancer Care Ontario.

**Heffernan, Mary Catherine.** Charge Nurse, Oncology Clinic, Peterborough Regional Healthcare Centre, Peterborough.

**Jessop, Pam.** Supervisor, Ontario Breast Screening Clinic Program-SEO, Kingston general Hospital, Kingston.

**Kessler, Linda.** Administrative Director Geriatric Psychiatry Services, Providence Continuing Complex Care (PCCC) -Mental Health Services, Kingston.

**Lyle, Kathy.** Clinical Nurse Specialist, PCCC-St. Mary's On The Lake, Kingston.

**McLaren, Capt. Cindy.** Primary Military Nursing Officer, Canadian Forces Base, Kingston.

**Morgan, Linda.** Palliative/Oncology Coordinator, All Care Health Services, Kingston.

**Palmateer Jane,** Charge Nurse, Oncology Clinic, Quinte Healthcare Corporation-Belleville General, Belleville.

**Pape, Marilyn.** Program Manager, Quinte Healthcare Corporation-Belleville General, Belleville.

**Peel, Karen.** Case Manger, KFL&A Community Care Access Centre, Kingston.

**Rennick, Cheryl.** Palliative Care Nurse Specialist, St. Vincent de Paul, Brockville.

**Robb Blenderman, Linda,** Clinical Practice Leader, Oncology, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Simon-Chambers, Beth.** Clinical Nurse Clinician, PCCC-St. Mary's On The Lake, Kingston.

**Tracey, Patti.** Manager Oncology, Peterborough Regional Healthcare Centre, Peterborough.

**Tranmer, Joan.** Director, Nursing Research, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Van Mamen, Lori.** Advanced Practice Nurse, Cancer Genetics Familial Oncology, Kingston General Hospital, Kingston.

**Vine, Debra.** Early Detection of Cancer Program, KFL&A Public Health, Kingston.

**Warner, Jane.** Clinical Nurse Specialist & Coordinator of Program Development, Breast Assessment Program, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston.

**Weir, Brenda.** Program Director, Northumberland Hills Hospital, Cobourg.

**Whitmarsh, Claudia.** Director of Patient Services, PCCC-St. Mary's On The Lake, Kingston.

**Zanchetta, Margareth,** Assistant Professor, Faculty of Health Science, Queens School of Nursing, Kingston.